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ABSTRACT

Inner and Central Asia extends as far east as central China and as far west as areas in the Middle East. The changing empires over time (as well as the "shifting sands" of the geographic landmass) made it difficult to consider this as a single area. Moreover, the cultural exchanges which took place across this landmass, the transport of ideas as well as goods, and the "timelessness" as well as the contemporary relevance, all make the task even more difficult to categorize. A person can enter a bazaar, which is "centerless," from many directions and wander through, exiting from a totally different door. The plan is to enter the bazaar delineated in this resource guide through any of these gates: the early history of inner Asia; the Silk Road; the Mongol Empire; Islam; playing the Great Game; or in the modern period. The resource guide begins with an introduction, maps, a time chart, a glossary, and the Teacher Guide (Teaching Methodology; Suggested Teaching Activities). It is then divided into the following broadly sketched sections: (1) "How Can One Imagine Inner Asia Geographically?" ("Landscape and Climate; Settlements and Dwellings"); (2) "How Did Movement across the Region Influence Multiple Cultural Interaction?" ("Migration: Explorations, Quests and Conquests"; "Trade and Material Exchange"; "Religion and Information Exchange"; "Culture and Customs"); (3) "How Did the Mongolian Conquest and Empire Influence Inner Asia History?" ("Mongolian Customs and Traditions"; "Mongols' Achievements and Heroes"); and (4) "How Does Inner Asia Fit into the Modern Content of Global Issues?" ("Politics and Nationhood"; "Society in Transition"; "Economy and Development"; "Environment)". Seven teacher background readings are included. (BT)

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Spotlight on
Inner Asia
The Bizarre Bazaar

TEACHER AND STUDENT RESOURCE GUIDE

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The Bizarre Bazaar

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Letter from the Director

Developing the materials about Inner and Central Asia was one of the most difficult chores we have ever attempted. Prior to this collection, we had successfully designed curriculum guides which tended to deal with discrete areas of the world – the standard area studies approach. Although we call this volume **Spotlight on Inner/Central Asia: The Bizarre Bazaar**, this is not a self-contained area. Instead, Inner and Central Asia extends as far east as central China and as far west as areas in the Middle East. The changing empires over time (as well as the "shifting sands" of the geographic landmass) made it very difficult to consider this a discreet area. Moreover, the cultural exchanges which took place across this landmass, the transport of ideas as well as goods, and the "timelessness" as well as the contemporary relevance, all made the task even more difficult to categorize. As a result, we ended up with a mass of material – some esoteric, some practical – all of which had to be organized into some sort of coherent curriculum guide which would be useful to teachers. That task could not have been accomplished without the wonderful assistance we had from scholars in the area as well as our highly patient office staff.

The primary task of selecting materials which could be adapted and used for this guide fell to our four scholars: Professor Morris Rossabi, Columbia University; Professor Devin DeWeese, Indiana University; Professor Dru Gladney, University of Hawaii; and Professor Robert McChesney, New York University. Each provided us with extraordinary primary documents and background material. Meeting with all of them to discuss this project was a very exciting experience. We are grateful for their commitment to help pre-collegiate teachers and students. We realize that some of the material is difficult and may even appear "strange" in light of material found in textbooks, but our goal was to assemble an interesting and very challenging collection of readings which would focus attention on Eurasia and its history.

The major role of deciphering how these material should be arranged fell to Nadya Tkachenko, a recent graduate of Middlebury College. Nadya was given a mass of documents and within a six-week period she was able to arrange the format for the readings. Her concept of looking at Inner Asia through four different lenses proved to be more effective than studying the area either geographically or historically. Although the section headings are broadly sketched, the concept of developing one's geographic imagination to study the area, as well as partake in the cultural interactions which occurred via transports of material goods was an outstanding method to bring together vastly divergent readings. We applaud her creativity! The final two sections are more traditional with one examining the Mongols and their impact on history and the last looking at Central and Inner Asia in the global context. We complete the readings with short background pieces to help teachers develop a deeper understanding of this material.

We hope you will find this collection of readings useful. We have created a brief teacher's guide with some suggestions on how these materials can be used in a World History or Asian Studies class. We have also included some pedagogical techniques which we find useful when we work with teachers. Although many of the readings are long, we see them as a supplement to textbooks and as an excellent source of enriching the classroom experience. We do believe the materials can act as a link between other curriculum guides we have developed such as **Spotlight on China: Traditions Old and New** and **Spotlight on the Muslim Middle East: Crossroads**. This project was generously funded by the International Studies and Research Division of the U.S. Department of Education. We appreciate their support for this work.

Hazel Sara Greenberg
Director, The American Forum

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 8

MAPS 10-13

TIME CHART 14-15

GLOSSARY 16

TEACHER GUIDE

Teaching Methodology 20

Suggested Teaching Approaches 34

ONE: *HOW CAN ONE IMAGINE INNER ASIA GEOGRAPHICALLY?*

A: Landscape and Climate

1. *Taklamakan* – "Go In and You Won't Come Out" 56
2. The Haunted Desert of Lop Nor 58
3. The Quest for Water 59
4. Challenging Nature 62
5. Mountain of Blinding Darkness 63

B: Settlements and Dwellings

1. Why "Silk" Road and Why Silk "Road"? 65
2. Caravans: Moving Cities of the Desert 66
3. The Unknown Kingdoms 66
4. The Sleeping City of *Lou-Lan* 67
5. Further Findings at *Lou-Lan* 69
6. Exploring Bokhara 69
7. Bukhara: The Medieval Achievement 70
8. Merv: Oasis of Turquoise and Ravens 72
9. Memories of Samarkand 74
10. Beyond the Eastern Frontiers 75

TWO: *HOW DID MOVEMENT ACROSS THE REGION INFLUENCE MULTIPLE CULTURAL INTERACTION?*

A: Migration: Explorations, Quests and Conquests

1. Women Warriors: A Matriarchal Society? 76
2. The Mummies of Urumchi 78
3. From Desert to Oasis 79
4. Life Along the Silk Road 80
5. Princes of Learning: Avicenna, Al-Biruni 88
6. Ulugh-Beg: the Father of Astrology 89
7. The Adventures of Ibn Battuta 90

8. The Cradle of the Turks 92
9. Who are the Kazakhs? 94
10. Formation of Ethnic Kazakhs 95
11. A Timurid Embassy to China 95

B: Trade and Material Exchange

1. Trade Document 98
2. Value of Silk 98
3. Trading Horses 99
4. Threads of Imagination 99
5. Who Were the Weavers? 100
6. The Dye that Binds 101
7. Buddhist Silk Textiles 101

C: Religion and Information Exchange

1. Melting Pot of Religions 103
2. Buddhism and the Silk Road 103
3. A Buddhist Pilgrim on the Silk Road 105
4. Who were the Khazars? 109
5. The Khazar Kingdom's Conversion to Judaism 109
6. Jewish Groups in Modern Central Asia 110
7. Gnosis on the Silk Road 111
8. Christianity on the Silk Road 114
9. A Nestorian Gravestone 114
10. The Shamans of Mongolia 115
11. Conversion to Islam 115
12. Central Asian Islam 116
13. Battle at Talas 117
14. Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde 117

D: Culture and Customs

1. The Golden Horses 118
2. Birth of the Chariot 120
3. Wisdom of Royal Glory (*Kutadgu Bilig*) 121
4. From the Cradle to the Grave 123
5. Marriage of a Prince 124
6. Reading the Weaves of *Kilim* 125
7. Marriage Customs in the 17th Century 126
8. A Hospitable Home in the Kirghiz Steppe 128
9. Food in Central Asia 128
10. Origins of Music in Turkic Xinjiang 130
11. Weather Magic in Inner Asia 132
12. Empires Against Slavery in Central Asia 134

THREE: *HOW DID THE MONGOLIAN CONQUEST AND EMPIRE INFLUENCE INNER ASIAN HISTORY?*

A: Mongolian Customs and Traditions

1. Envoys' Stories of the Mongols 135
2. How they Make Comos And what Animals They Eat 138
3. Food, Dress and Crafts of the Mongols 139
4. Music and Dance in Mongolia 141
5. Where the Silk Road Took a Detour 145
6. Why Did They Leave? 146

B: Mongols' Achievements and Heroes

1. The Secret History of the Mongols 147
2. The Mongol War Machine 159
3. Chingis's Moral Demands 160
4. All the Khan's Horses 161
5. Women of the Mongol Court 163
6. Of the Capture of Bukhara 165
7. Khubiali Khan 166
8. Who was Marco Polo? 168
9. The Great Khan Through Marco Polo's Eyes 170
10. Did Marco Polo Go to China? 176
11. End of the Mongols 176

FOUR: *HOW DOES INNER ASIA FIT INTO THE MODERN CONTENT OF GLOBAL ISSUES?*

A: Politics and Nationhood

1. Central Asia Divided: the Great Game 179
2. Back on the Map 182
3. Central Asia Claims its Heritage 184
4. United by the Silk Road and Divided by the Great Game 185
5. Likely Lads: Central Asian Leaders 185
6. Flying High: Flags of New Nation States 187
7. India's Growing Central Asia Presence May Increase Instability 189
8. A Marriage of Convenience: The Great Game is Not Over 191
9. Eight Deadly Warnings 192
10. To Beard or not to Beard 193
11. Trouble in the 'Stans 193
12. Afghanistan as Center: Central Asia's New Geopolitics 195
13. Confrontation Brews Among Islamic Militants in Central Asia 196
14. Good Fences, Bad Neighbors 198

B: Society in Transition

1. A New Effort to Shine 200
2. Silk Road City Seeks Old Glory 201

3. Language and the Search for Uzbek National Identity 202
4. The Politics of Language 203
5. Every Man a Khan 204
6. The Youngest Place on Earth 206
7. The Changing World of Mongolia's Nomads 209
8. Inner Mongolians mark 53 Years of Occupation 211
9. The Rebirth of Kyrgizstan 211
10. Koreans: A submerged identity of Central Asia 213
11. Ethnic Reawakening in Western China 214
12. Oasis Identities: The Uyghurs 215
13. Rumblings from the Uyghurs 218
14. "All Hui Under Heaven Are One Family" 219

C: Economy and Development

1. Mongolia in 1990's 225
2. Bounty From the Sheep 228
3. Unavoidable Corruption 230
4. A Caspian Gamble 231
5. Leaders Aim for Free-Trade Zone 236
6. Heroin and Needles: A New Commodity on the Silk Road 237
7. Feeling Low, Getting High 239
8. Foreign Aid Programs Against Poverty in Kyrgyzstan 240
9. What the WTO Means for Xinjiang 242
10. Rich Slice of Soviet Asia, Left to a Lonely Despair 244

D: Environment

1. Oil Discovery Threatens Mongolian Antelope 245
2. Changing Attitudes of Pastoral People 245
3. The Pride of Genghis Khan Flies On 246
4. A Soviet Sea Lies Dying 247
5. Poisoned Waters 249
6. Water Becomes a Political Issue 250
7. The Fate of Eastern Kazakhstan 251
8. The Nuclear Desert of Lop Nor 252
9. Sitting on a Pile of Uranium 252

TEACHER BACKGROUND READINGS

1. Central Asia Imagined Geographically 254
2. Geography and History of China and Inner Asia 255
3. Asia in Western and World History: A Guide for Teaching 259
4. Aurel Stein: Pioneer of the Silk Road 261
5. The Story of the Silk Road 263
6. Religions of the Silk Road 273
7. Modern Central Asia: Problems of Wealth, a Wealth of Problems 280

INTRODUCTION

The "Bizarre Bazaar"

What do you expect when you enter a bazaar? After all, that is the place where many peoples, products, ideas, and beliefs co-mingle. As you move from area to area within a bazaar, there is truly an assault upon your senses. Sometimes you are seeing the unfamiliar and perhaps "exotic"; other times you are listening to music from unusual musical instruments; certainly you are appreciating many different scents; you have the opportunity to touch silks, velvets, furs, woods and other surfaces; you can taste foods and drinks which excite your senses. Is this "bizarre?" Within the realm of everyday life, where we often see and do the same daily chores, the bazaar can be bizarre.

Can we develop the analogy that Inland Asia (a.k.a. Central Asia or Inner Asia) is akin to a bazaar? Let's see what we can discover!

Let's try to begin with a definition of the area we are talking about. This is not easy because different people will express different boundaries. Maybe the boundaries are "elastic" or maybe they need to be re-defined. And is a physical definition the only way we can begin when we start speaking about Inner Asia?

The contemporary states and territories might be a good place to look first. We can travel east to west – from China to the borders to the Middle East. We will include: Western China, Tibet, Inner Mongolia and even look at Mongolia. Then we will move to the core of states that traditionally were called Central Asia. These states, just recently a portion of the Soviet Union, are now the "stans" – Turkmenistan, Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrghizstan. We now will turn to older societies – northern Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, touching on small areas in the Caucasus and the Caspian Basin.

We are talking about a portion of the world which presents the following problems:

- *What shall we call it?*
- *Why are there so many countries; who made/makes that decision?*
- *Who created these countries?*
- *How has it been overrun by so many civilizations? How have they affected the region?*
- *Where is the boundary; why is there no core; what is its periphery?*

This is a vast area, a land sea, a Silk Route, a Eurasian land mass. From the time of Alexander the Great, men and women, singly and representing nations, have traversed this region. And yet, because of the constant intercourse across the region, all of these nations share some characteristics.

- *Linguistically and culturally, the roots of Inner Asia can be found in Iranian (Persian) and Turkic culture from prehistoric times.*
- *The Turkic populations have traversed this area for over a millennium. This is supported by the predominance of Turkic languages in many regions throughout much of history.*
- *Persian is frequently the language of the people.*
- *Economic life is often not above subsistence, focusing on pastoral nomads, some settled agriculture, a dependence on craft production and, eternally, trade.*
- *The predominant religion is Islam. Lamaist Buddhism and some local forms of Christianity can also be located.*
- *There have been few times in history when Inner Asia was spotlighted; generally it has occupied a more peripheral and marginal position, often surrounded by powerful states or subsumed by vast*

empires.

- *Currently, there is the problem of new states and the need for economic reform.*

So what have we discovered?

- *There are layers of cultures over a land mass that have been the meeting place of civilizations.*
- *This is an area of overlapping spaces and artificial boundaries.*
- *Many nation-states which have been artificially created, perhaps as an accident of history.*
- *In this region there may never have been a heartland or a center.*
- *The history of separate homogenous civilizations, now gone.*
- *This is a region was only unified when under the domination of others.*
- *We are about to explore an area which is different because it impinges on so many civilizations.*

We appear to be talking about an area which is "centerless," like a bazaar which has no center. You can enter a bazaar from many directions and wander through, exiting from a totally different door. Our bazaar of Inner Asia is the same. You can enter from Beijing; you can enter from Istanbul. The many gates allow you to wander across this region as men have done for centuries, often discovering new places and things in their travels. However, like a bazaar, there are meeting places. If you were to spend a day in the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul, you could meet at the medieval fountain. If you plan to wander in Xi'an, your meeting place could be the lane that leads to the Moslem mosque. Throughout this area, there are many places where people and cultures meet. Caravanseries and oases are good places to meet and exchange. You can travel this great expanse from Asia to Europe, from the Mediterranean to the Baltic, from the Himalayas to the Tien Shan. Along the way, there will be "gates", both metaphoric and actual, where you will pass from culture to culture.

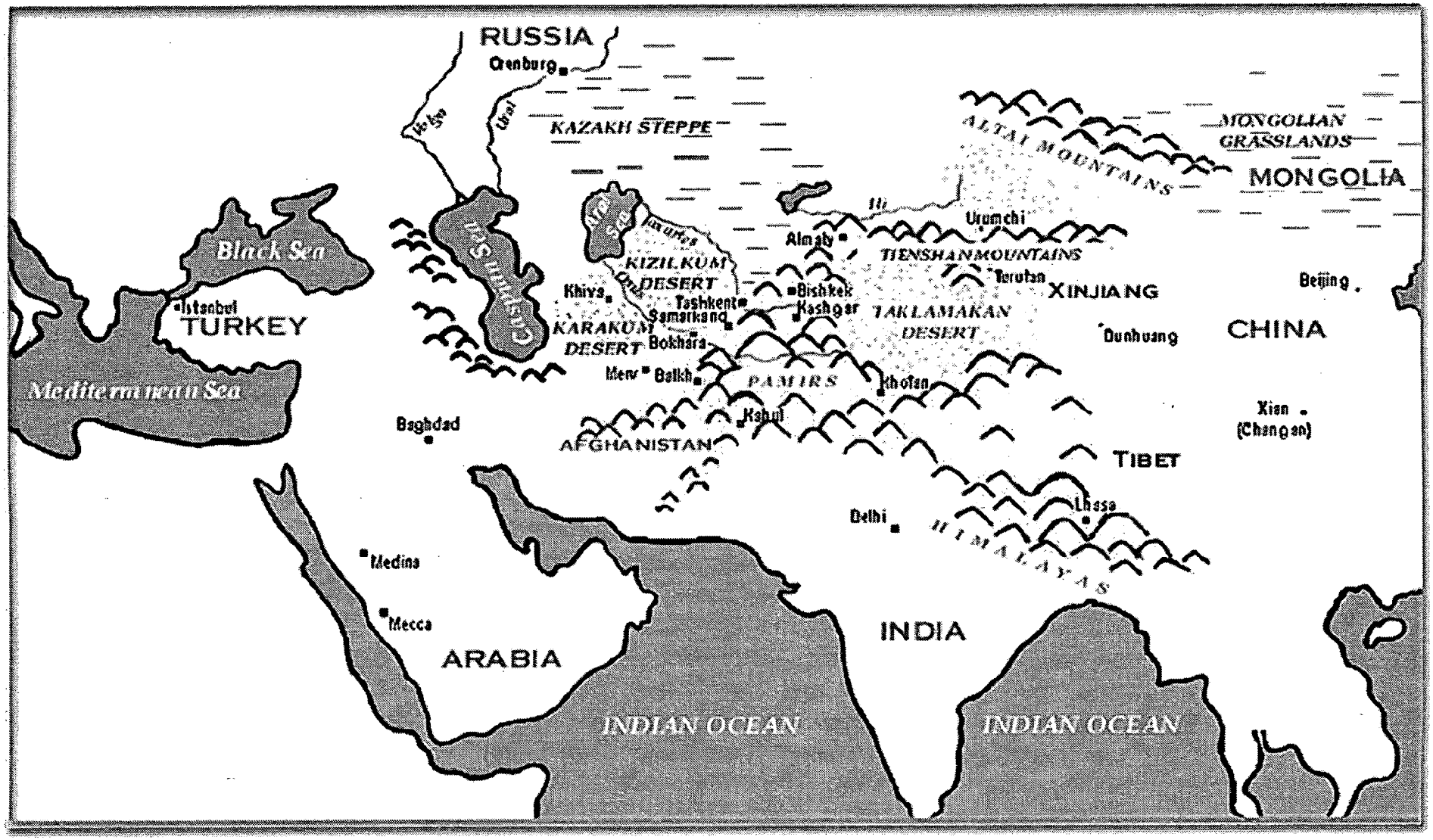
Probably, the most interesting aspect of a bazaar is the variety that is available. Our bazaar will touch the bizarre and the prosaic. We will investigate objects and heritages – carpets and kilims*; textiles and handicrafts; silk and cotton; foods, spices, and tea. Those are all things we can touch and carry on our camels (or, today, four-wheel drive vehicles) across deserts and mountains to other gates. But we will be contemporary nomads, mixing our saddle bags with consumables and ideas. We will look at the exchange of languages as Turkic speaking people spread southwest and Chinese speaking people spread northwest. Folklore comes with language, as does religion and the artifacts of belief systems. Ideas are carried orally and on scrolls; they are images, icons and the written word. Literacy and/or the lack of literacy will help to explain why some cultures were placed on the periphery.*

We plan to have you enter our bazaar through any of these gates: the early history of inner Asia; the Silk Road; the Mongol Empire; Islam; playing the Great Game or in the modern period. In all cases, we will try to construct our bazaar and explain the interaction of peoples and products, the formal and informal encounters, and the multiple forms which make this an extraordinarily exciting and unusual region of the world. Rather than interpret each of the readings for you, since they vary from an indigenous voice to that of a distant onlooker, we are going to let you "shop" at your own pace, trying on different ideas, picking some up and putting others down and then selecting that which will be useable and useful for you. We hope you find the material worthy of your time and attention and, at the same time, motivational enough to encourage you to continue learning about this exciting area we call ***Inner Asia!***

Let's go to the bazaar!

GEOGRAPHY OF INNER ASIA

MAP 1



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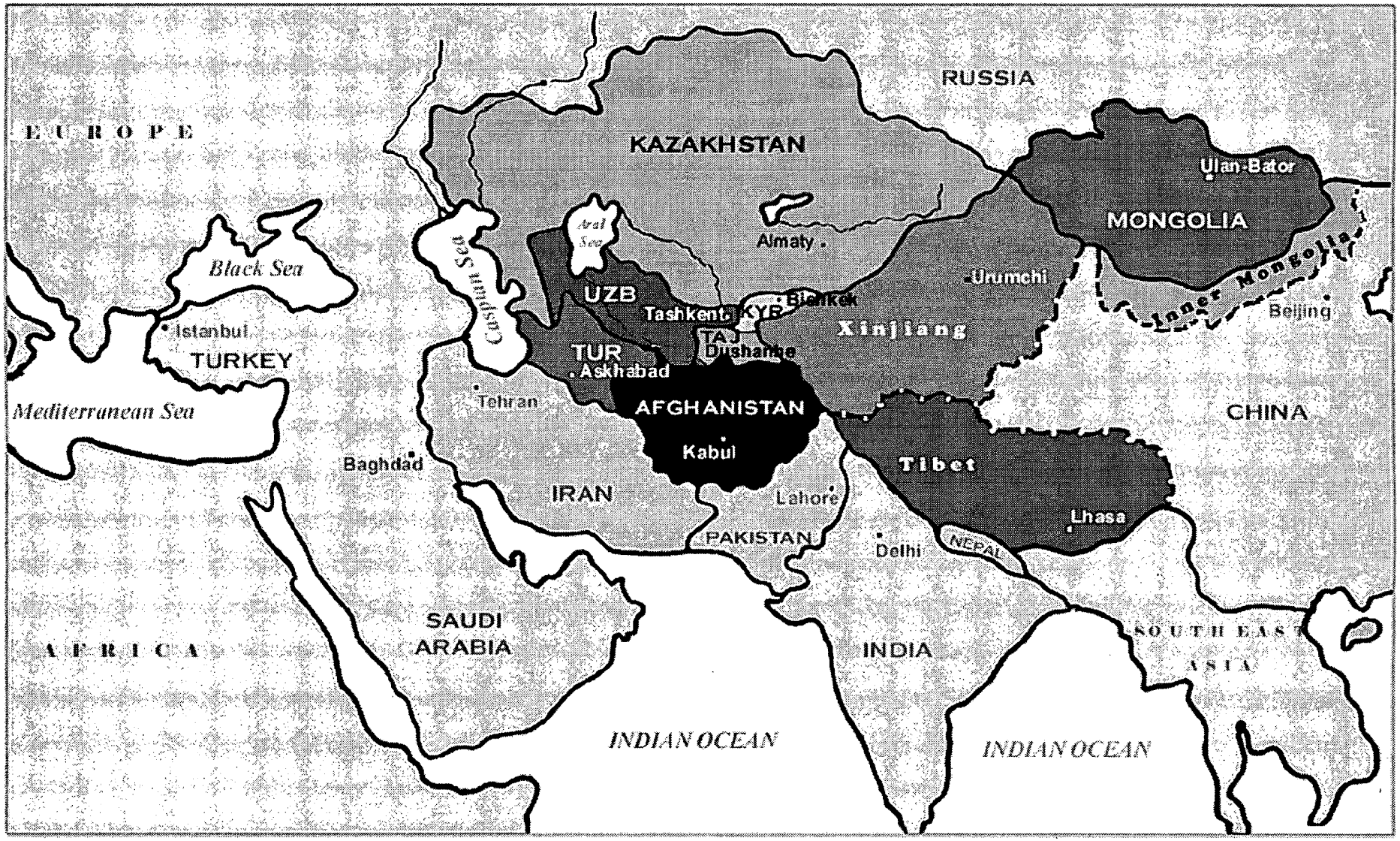
INNER ASIA: POLITICAL MAP

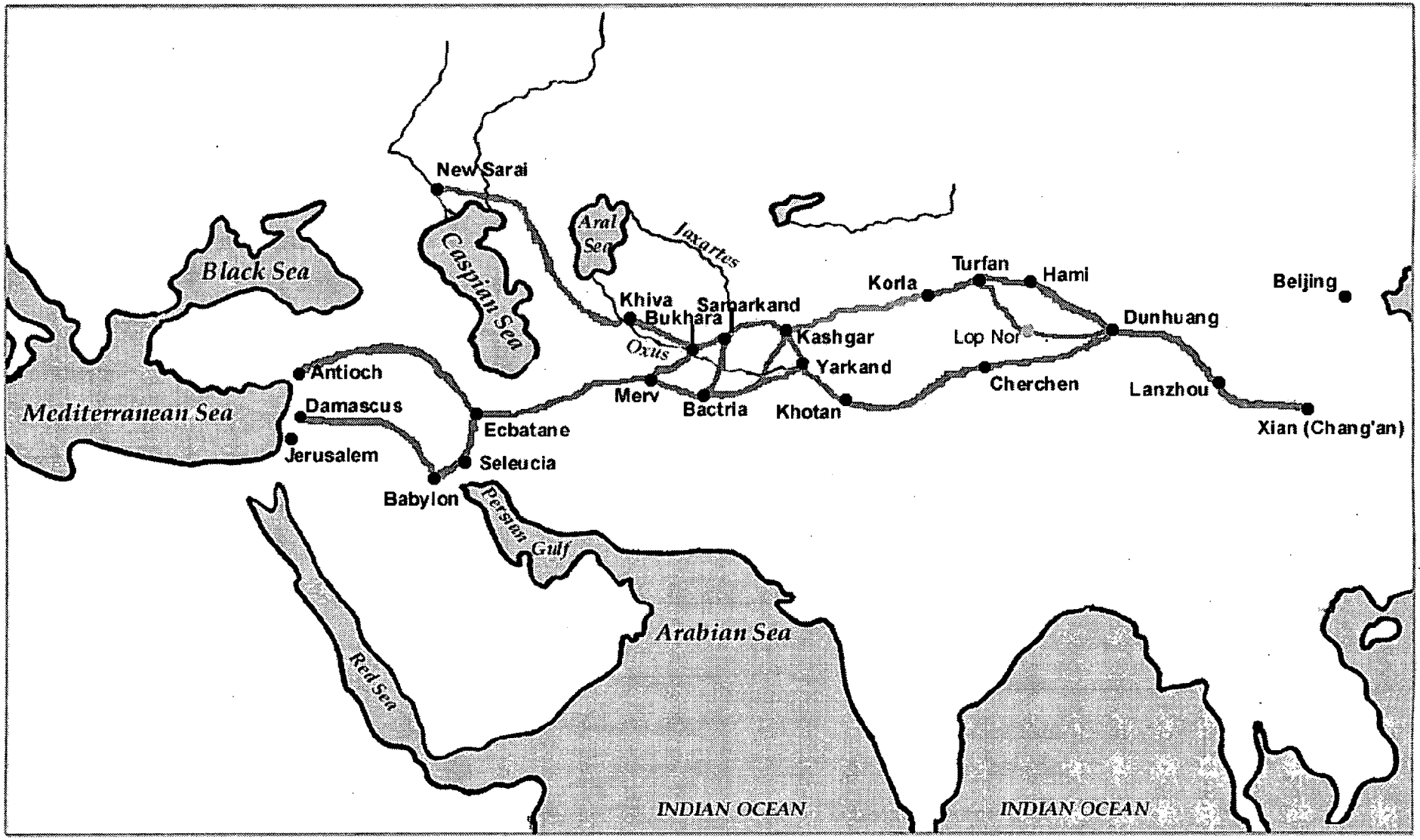
MAP 2



UZB - UZBEKISTAN KYR - KYRGHIZSTAN — — — Provincial Borders
TAJ - TAJIKISTAN TUR - TURKMENISTAN

THE SILK ROUTES

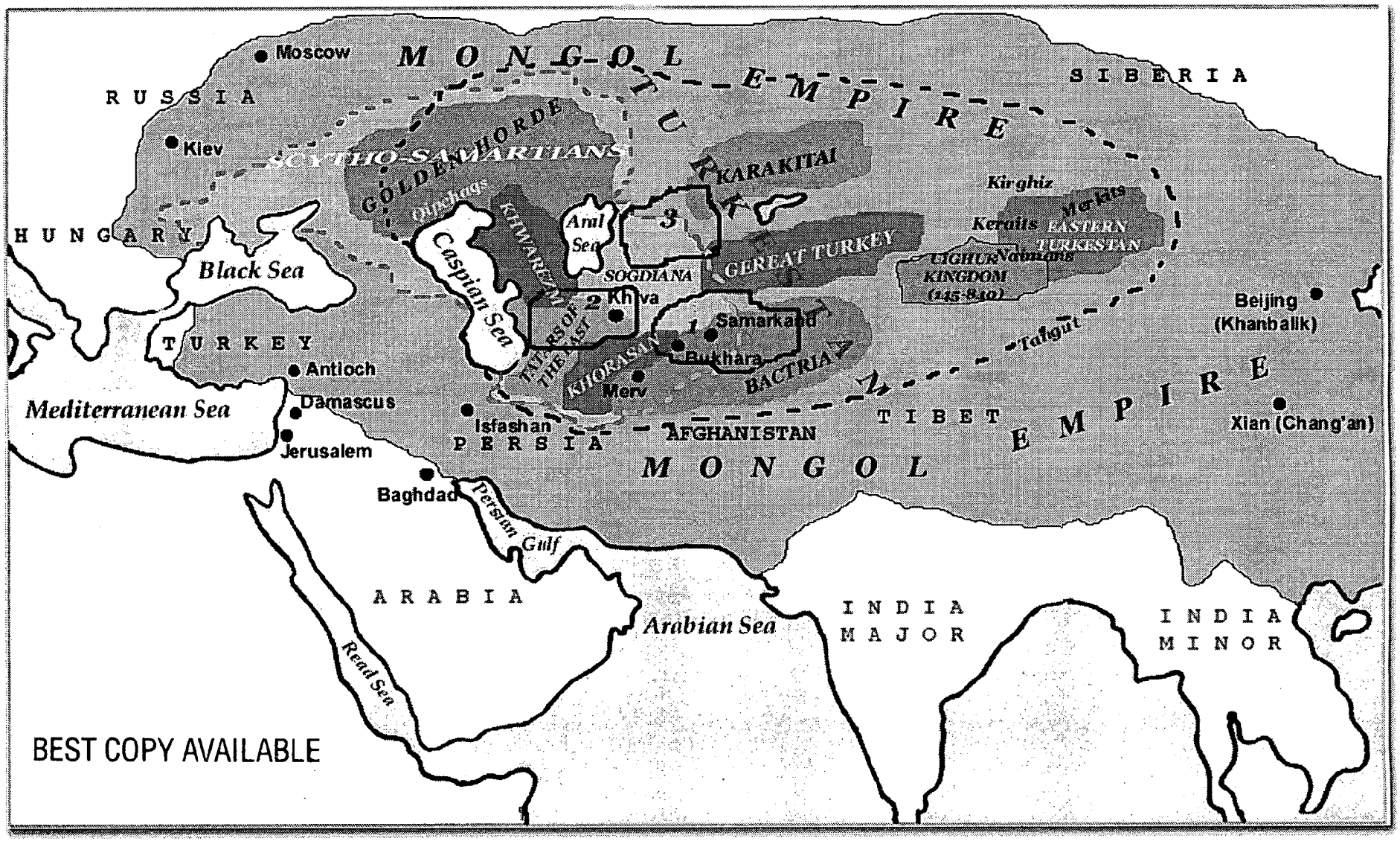
MAP 3



EMPIRES AND TERRITORIES

Mainly during Mongolian Empire (14th century) unless marked otherwise

MAP 4



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THE MONGOL EMPIRE (1300 - 1405)
SCYTHO-SAMARTIANS (8-4 cent. B.C.E)
TURKESTAN (18-19 cent. A.D.)

1 - Khanate of Bokhara (1920)
2 - Khanate of Khiva (1919)
3 - Khanate of Kokand (1876)

TIME CHART *(Pre-Soviet: up to early 20th century)*

NOTE: All dates, unless otherwise indicated, are C.E.

CENTRAL ASIA	CHINA	MONGOLIA	PERSIA	RUSSIAN AND BRITISH INVOLVEMENT	TURKEY
c. 1200 B.C.E. The Cimmerians begin to occupy the South Russian Steppe. **c. 700 B.C.E.** The Scythians replace the Cimmerians in the steppe region.					
4th c. B.C.E. The Samartians begin to absorb the Scythians.	**206 B.C.E.** The Han Dynasty is established in China. **106 B. C. E.** Diplomatic ties are established between the Chinese and the Persians.		**6th c. B.C.E.** The invasion of Transoxiana by the Acuminates of Persia under Darius I and Cyrus. **329-28 B.C.E.** The invasion and capture of Samarkand by the Greeks under Alexander the Great. **250 B.C.E.** The Parthians (Persians) take Soghdiana from the Greeks.		
	97 C. E. Chinese armies reach the Caspian Sea. **220 C. E.** End of the Han Dynasty in China.		**3rd c. C.E.** The decline of Kushan and Parthian (Persian) Empires and the incorporation of Soghd and Bactria into Persia under the Sassanian dynasty. **226 C. E.** The Sassanians overthrow the Parthians (Persians) in Persia.		
370 C. E. The Huns invade Europe from the Central Asian steppe.		**4th c. C. E.** The Mongolian Juan-juan Empire is founded in Mongolia.			
440 C. E. The Hephthalites (White Huns, later known in the West as the Avars) move south from the Altai region to occupy Transoxiana, Bactria, Khurasan and Eastern Persia					**552 C. E.** The Turks destroy the Juan-juan Empire and establish the Turkic Khaganate (Western and Eastern Khanates). **553-68 C. E.** The Turks and the Sassanians ally to destroy the Hephthalite Empire. **572-91 C.E** The Turks and the Byzantines ally against the Sassanians, the Turks invade the Caucasus and establish the Khazar Khanate.
	618 The Tang Dynasty is established in China.				
	630-40 The Chinese occupy Mongolia and subdue the Tarim Basin.				
c. 650 The Khazars defeat the Avars and Bulgars, resulting in their domination of the Caucasus and Volga region.	**659** Chinese forces penetrate into Transoxiana (Western Turkic Khanate).				**682-83** The revolt of the Turks against the Chinese; re-establishment of the Turkic Khanate in Mongolia.
709 The Arabs capture Bukhara and Samarkan. **713** The Arabs sack Kashgar.					
728 Arabs attempt to forcibly convert Transoxiana to Islam, resulting in general revolt.					
		744/45 The Uighurs defeat the Turks in Mongolia and establish the Uighur Empire.			
		840 Kirghiz replace the Uighurs in Mongolia, who flee to Turfan to establish the Uighur Kingdom.			
			867-69 The rise of the Saffarid Dynasty (Shi'ite) in Persia.		
	906 The end of the Tang Dynasty in China.		**900** The Samanid (Sunni) overthrow the Saffarids, thus extending their rule to all of Persia.		
		924 The Mongol Khitans defeat the Kirghiz.			
985 The Seljuq Turks move to the vicinity of Bukhara.					
			1055 The Seljuqs capture Baghdad, establish the Seljuq Sultanate and become the official protectors of the Caliphate.		
		1155 (1162-1167?) The birth of Chingiz Khan.			
			1194 The death of the last Persian Seljuq ruler, ending Seljuq power in Iran.		

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CENTRAL ASIA	CHINA	MONGOLIA	PERSIA	RUSSIAN AND BRITISH INVOLVEMENT	TURKEY
		1206 Chingiz Khan becomes khan of the Mongols. **1209** The Uighurs submit to Mongol rule. **1215 -1221** The Mongols burn Peking, capture occupying Kashgar, Samarkand and Bukhara, Aghanistan. **1227** The death of Chingiz Khan and the division of his empire amongst his heirs. **1240** Kiev falls to the Mongols and Russia comes under the Mongol yoke. **1242 - 1256** The Mongols stop at the gates of Vienna, defeat the Seljuqs, establish Il-Khanid dynasty in Iran, destroy Baghdad and bring the Assasid caliphate to an end. **1260** The Mongol Yüan is established in China under Kublai Khan.			
1313-41/42 The rule of the Golden Horde by Khan Uzbeb (1282-1342) and conversion to Islam.					
	1368 The end of the Yüan dynasty in China.		**1380-87** Timur conquers Iran.		
		1398-1405 Timur (Tamerlane) defeats the Delhi sultanate, Mamlukes in Syria, destroys Baghdad, defeats the Ottoman sultan.			
				1480 Ivan III of Russia throws off the Mongol yoke and proclaims himself Tzar.	**1453** The Ottoman Turks capture Constantinople.
late 15th c. The Kazakh Empire is established on the Central Asian steppes.					
1502 The final collapse of the Golden Horde in the hands of the Crimean Tartar Khanate. **1506** The Uzbeks capture Bukhara.			**1502** The beginning of the Safavid dynasty in Persia.		**1517** The Ottomans defeat the Mamlukes, adding Egypt to their Empire.
late 16th c. The Kazakh Empires divides into three hordes: Great Horde (east), Middle Horde (center) and the Lesser Horde (west).				**1552** Ivan IV (the Terrible) subjugates the Kazan Khanate.	
	1644 The Manchu Qing (Ching) Dynasty is established in China.			**1619-20** The first diplomatic contacts between Moscow and Bukhara.	
				1715 The first Russian military expedition to the Kazakh steppe under Peter the Great.	
			1722 The Afghans invade Persia, bringing to an end the Safavid Dynasty.		
				1731 The Kazakh Lesser Horde accepts Russian protection. **1740** The Kazakh Middle Horde accepts Russian protection. **1742** Part of the Kazakh Great Horde accept Russian protection	
	1759 The Chinese conquer the Tarim Basin. **1768** Eastern (Chinese) Turkestan is officially renamed "Xinjiang" by the Chinese. **1771** The Chinese attempt to bring the Kazakhs into a vassal relationship.				
1798 The establishment of the Uzbek Khanate.				**1782-3** The Crimean Tatar Khanate is absorbed by Russia.	
	1850-64 The Taiping Rebellion in China.			**1839-42** The First Anglo-Afghan War results in British capturing Kabul and Qandahar. **1854** The founding of Alma-Ata by the Russians. **1855** Russia is defeated in the Crimean War. **1855** Kazakhstan comes fully under Russian control. **1865** The Russians create the Province of Turkestan and capture Tashkent. **1868** The Russians capture Samarkand and the Khanate of Bukhara becomes a Russian protectorate. **1878** Beginning of the Second Anglo-Afghan War. **1887** The border between Afghanistan and Russian Turkestan is determined by the British and the Russians. **1890-92** Mass-immigration of Russian and Ukrainian settlers into the Kazakh steppe.	
	1878 Kashgar falls to the Chinese.				
	1911 The Republican Revolution in China brings the Qing Dynasty to an end.				

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GLOSSARY

Cities

Balkh (Bactria)	Capital of Bactria. Ancient country in Southwestern Asia, between Hindu Kush and Oxus(Amu Darya) river.
Beijing	Currently capital of China. Other names and spellings: Beiping, Peiping, Pekin, Taidu, Khanbalik.
Bukhara (Bokhara)	Former emirate of Western Asia around city of Bukhara. Presently a town in Uzbekistan East of Amu Darya.
Dunhuang	An ancient city on the Silk Road. Presently in the Chinese province of Gansu.
Ferghana	City and Valley in the Tien Shan in Kirghizstan, Tadzhikistan, & Uzbekistan southeast of Tashkent.
Khiva (Khorezm)	City in the oasis, a capital of Khwarezm Khanate in Central Asia.
Khotan	Town and oasis in Western China in Southwestern Xinjiang on Southern edge of the Taklamakan.
Kucha (Kuqa)	An ancient city on the Silk Road.
Lou-Lan	An ancient city on the Silk Road.
Miran	An ancient city on the Silk Road.
Niya	An ancient city on the Silk Road.
Samarqand (Samarkand)	An ancient city of Maracanda. Presently a city in Uzbekistan.
Turfan (Turpan, Turufan)	Town in Turfan Depression in Western China in Eastern Xinjiang in Northeastern part of Tarim basin. An ancient city on the Silk Road.
Urumqi (Urumchi)	City in Northwestern China. Capital of Xinjiang province on the North side of Tien Shan.
Xi'an (Chang'an)	City in East Central China. Capital of Shensi on the Wei. Ancient Capital of China.

Territories and Empires

Bactria	Ancient country in Southwestern Asia, between Hindu Kush and Oxus river.
Transoxania	A part of ancient Central Asia, separated from the West by the Oxus river. Present Uzbekistan.
Parthia	Persia. Presently Iran.
Scythia	The country of the ancient Scythians comprising parts of Europe and Asia in regions North and Northeast of Black sea and East of Aral Sea.
Sogdiana	Province of ancient Persian Empire between *Jaxartes* (Syr Darya) and *Oxus* (Amu Darya).
Turkistan (Turkestan)	Region in Central Asia between Iran and Siberia. Now divided between Russia, Kazakhstan, China and Afghanistan.
Xinjiang (Sinkiang)	A province of China between Kunlun and Altai Mountains. Formerly and independent Republic of Eastern Turkestan.
Tibet	Oficially, a province in Southwest China on a high Himalayan plateau.

Rivers

Amu Darya (Oxus)	Flows from the Pamir Plateau into the Aral Sea in Kazakhstan.
Ili	Flows from Western Xinjiang West and Northwest into Lake Balkhash in Kazakhstan.
Indus	Flows from Tibet Northwest and Southwest through Pakistan into Arabian Sea.
Syr Darya (Jaxartes)	Flows from Tien Shan Mountains West and Northwest into Aral Sea.
Talas	River in Central Asia.
Tarim	Starting in Western China (Xinjiang) in the Takla-Makan, flows East and Southeast into Lop Nor desert.
Ural	Starting at South end of the Ural Mountains in Russia and flowing South into the Caspian Sea in Kazakhstan, it is considered to be a dividing line between Asia and Europe.

Mountains

Altai	A mountain range stretching from Outer Mongolia to Western China (Xinjiang) and between Kazakhstan and Russia.
Himalaya	Mountains on the border between India and Tibet and in Kashmir, Nepal, and Buthan.
Karakoram (Karakorum)	Mountain system in Northern Kashmir and Northwestern Tibet on the border with Xinjiang. Connects Himalayas with Pamirs.
Pamirs	Mountain region in Tajikistan and on the border with Xinjiang, Kashmir, and Afghanistan, from which radiate *Tien Shan* to the North, *Kunlun* & *Kara-koram* to the East, and *Hindu Kush* to the West.
Tien Shan	Mountain range extending from the Pamirs Northeast into Xinjiang.
Hindu Kush	Mountain range Southwest of the Pamirs on border of Kashmir and Afghanistan.

Other Geographic Terms

Lop Nor	Desert in western China. In ancient accounts it is spoken of as a marsh or a shallow lake.
Steppes	Vast stretches of arid, treeless land usually found in regions of extreme temperature range, specifically Southeastern Europe and Central Asia.
Taklamakan	Desert in western China, central Xinjiang, between Tian Shan and Kunlun mountains.

Political Terms

Caliphate	The office of dominion of a Caliph – a title for a successor of Muhammad as temporal and spiritual head of Islam.
Divan	Council Chamber.
Khan	A local chieftain or a man of rank in countries of Central Asia.
Khanate	The State or jurisdiction of a Khan (see below).
Emir (Amir)	A native ruler in parts of Asia and Africa.
Emirate	The state of jurisdiction of an Emir.
Padshah (Padishah)	A chief ruler of Iran.
Shah	The Sovereign of Iran.

Peoples and Civilizations

Abbasid	A dynasty of caliphs ruling the Muslim Empire (150-1258 CE) and claiming decent from Abbas the uncle of Muhammad.
Cherchen	Ancient People populating Central Asia in the Southern region of the Silk Road.
Hui	One of 56 nationalities officially recognized in China. One of 10 Muslim minorities.
Kazakhs	A People of Mongolian ancestry, probably with some Caucasian intermixture who inhabit chiefly the Central Asian Steppes.
Kyrghyz	A People of Mongolian ancestry, probably with some Caucasian intermixture who inhabit chiefly the mountainous territory between Central Asian Steppes and the Chinese western province of Xinjiang.
Sassanian	A dynasty that overthrew Parthians (Persians). Sogdiana and Bactria were added to Parthia under the Sassanian rule. (3rd cent. CE)
Seljuq (Seljuk)	Several Turkish dynasties ruling over a great part of Western Asia (populated by Seljuk people) in the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries.
T'ang	A Chinese Dynasty dated A.D. 618-907 and marked by wide contacts with other cultures and by the development of printing and flourishing of poetry and art.
Tartar	People native to or inhabiting the Tartary.
Tajiks	People of Iranian blood and speech who resemble Europeans and are dispersed among the populations of Afghanistan and Turkestan.
Turkic	Anyone who speaks Turkic language, living in and outside of Turkey. A vast population inhabiting a vast region from the Great Wall of China in the east to the Balkans in the west, and from Siberia in the north to Afghanistan in the south.
Turkmen(Turkoman)	A member of a group of peoples East of Turkic stock living chiefly in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.
Uighur	A member of a Turkic people powerful in Mongolia and Eastern Turkestan between the 8th and the 12th centuries A.D. who constitute the majority of the population of Chinese Turkestan (Xinjiang).
Uzbek	Member of a Turkic people of Turkestan.

Religious Terms

Bodhisattva	One whose essence is enlightenment: a being that compassionately refrains from entering nirvana in order to save others and is worshiped as a deity in Mahayana Buddhism.
Lama	A Lamaist Monk.
Lamaism	The Mahayana Buddhism of Tibet and Mongolia marked by Tantric and Shamanistic ritual and a dominant monastic hierarchy headed by the Dalai Lama.
Mahayana	A liberal and theistic branch of Buddhism comprising sects chiefly in Tibet, China, and Japan, teaching social concern and universal salvation.
Manicheism	Belief in religious and philosophical dualism, originating in Persia in the 3rd century AD and teaching the release of the spirit from matter though becoming a hermit or a monk.
Mullah	Muslim religious teacher.
Nestorianism	A religion that separated from Byzantine Christianity after 431 AD, centering in Persia and surviving chiefly in Asia Minor; claimed that divine and human persons remained separate in the reincarnate Christ.
Q'uran (Koran)	The book composed of writings accepted by Muslims as revelations made to Muhammad by Allah though the angel Gabriel.
Shamanism	A religion of the Ural-Altaic peoples of Northern Asia and Europe characterized by belief in an unseen

	world of gods, demons, and ancestral spirits responsive only to the shamans.
Shiite	The Muslim of the branch of Islam comprising sects believing in Ali and the *Imams* as the only rightful successors of Muhammad and in the concealment and messianic return of the last recognized *Imam*.
Sunni	The Muslims of the branch of Islam that adheres to the orthodox tradition and acknowledges the first four caliphs as rightful successors of Muhammad.
Sutra	A precept summarizing Vedic or Buddha's teaching.
Tantric	Mystic and Magic, as written in later Hindu an Buddhist scriptures.
Theravada	A conservative branch of Buddhism comprising sects chiefly in Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia, adhering to the original Pali scriptures alone and to the non-theistic ideal of nirvana for a limited select number.
Ulama (Ulema)	The body of Mullahs, (see Mullah).

Biographic Names and Terms

Chinghis Khan	Gengis Chengis, Chenggis, Gengis, Genghis, Chengiz, Chinggis, and other spelling variations. (1162-1227) Mongol conqueror.
Hedin, Sven	(1865-1952) Swedish explorer.
Stein, Aurel	A British archeologist, explorer, scholar, linguist, art expert.
Tamerlane (Timur, Temur)	(1336-1405) Eastern conqueror, son of Chenghis Khan.

Other Terms

Caravansarai (Caravansary)	A large bare building surrounding a court in eastern countries where caravans rest at night.
Comos (Kumiss)	Fermented mare's milk.
Ethnogenesis	The study of the origin of ethnicity.
Ethnonym	Specific title for a group of people united by common descent or ethnicity.
Ghazir	Warriors.
Howdah	Seat or covered pavilion on the back of an elephant or camel.
Kilim	Flat woven rug.
Kurgan	Burial mound of eastern Europe or Siberia.
Li	A Chinese unit of distance, equal to about 1/3 mile.
Madrasa (Medrese)	School, usually with a focus on the study of Muslim religion.
Seres	Silk.
Viand	Item of food; a choice or tasty dish.
Yurt	A circular domed tent of skins or felt stretched over a collapsible lattice framework which is traditionally used by the nomads of Central Asia and Siberia.

TEACHER GUIDE

METHODOLOGY

What we teach in the classroom is our single most important task. Content material must be timely, accurate, provocative, challenging, multicultural, multidisciplinary, and employ effective, innovative methodology.

We have grown to understand a good deal about the learning process over the last 25 years. In the "factory model" classroom, the students were required to sit quietly and absorb what the teacher was saying. The lecture format was standard and, unfortunately, continues to be used in some classrooms today. But we know that the "chalk and talk" format is not truly successful. We need to draw upon all the known and unknown resources the students bring to the classroom; we need to move the students from the known to the unknown, expanding their knowledge base and their curiosity as we progress. Getting students involved in the process of learning is crucial in today's environment.

However, there has been the veritable information explosion and teachers can no longer be considered the primary dispensers of information. The teacher cannot know everything, nor can the teacher be expected to instruct the student in how they can "think through" the material and apply it to their lives. The teacher can only serve as a facilitator, a mentor, a model from which the students can process the material. The teacher, like his students, is also the student.

In this curriculum guide, we have made an important decision. Rather than develop detailed lesson plans which provide step-by-step procedures for the students and the teachers, we have decided to provide an array of broad stroke methodologies. In other words, we are including an introductory section which cites several classroom strategies which we endorse and have found to be successful. However, we are leaving the final decision to the classroom teacher. The strategy the teacher selects will be determined by the length of time for the unit. If the teacher is able to devote a more extended period to any of these units, multiple cooperative learning and jigsaw lessons can be developed. If, on the other hand, the unit needs to be completed in five lessons or even one lesson, the teacher may select some strategies which are shorter. We subscribe to any student involvement strategies. In the long run, the classroom teacher knows the culture of his school and his classroom better than anyone else and should determine the appropriate classroom activities.

We have also included a **time line** as well as a series of maps to help students understand the time sequences of these many civilizations. The maps are (a) the geography of the region, (b) the political boundaries in contemporary times, (c) the Silk Road, and (d) empires and territories.

The guide, a compilation of classroom strategies and activities, includes:

(A) TAPPING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE
semantic mapping, anticipation guides, "What I know" charts
(B) VOCABULARY STRATEGIES
acquisition, CLOZE, building vocabulary and conceptual knowledge
(C) WRITING STRATEGIES
frames, essays, learning logs, and double-entry journals
(D) REVIEW STRATEGIES
organizers
(E) INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES
cooperative learning

We hope you find this material useful and look forward to sharing with you the classroom techniques you have created to "deliver" this interesting content.

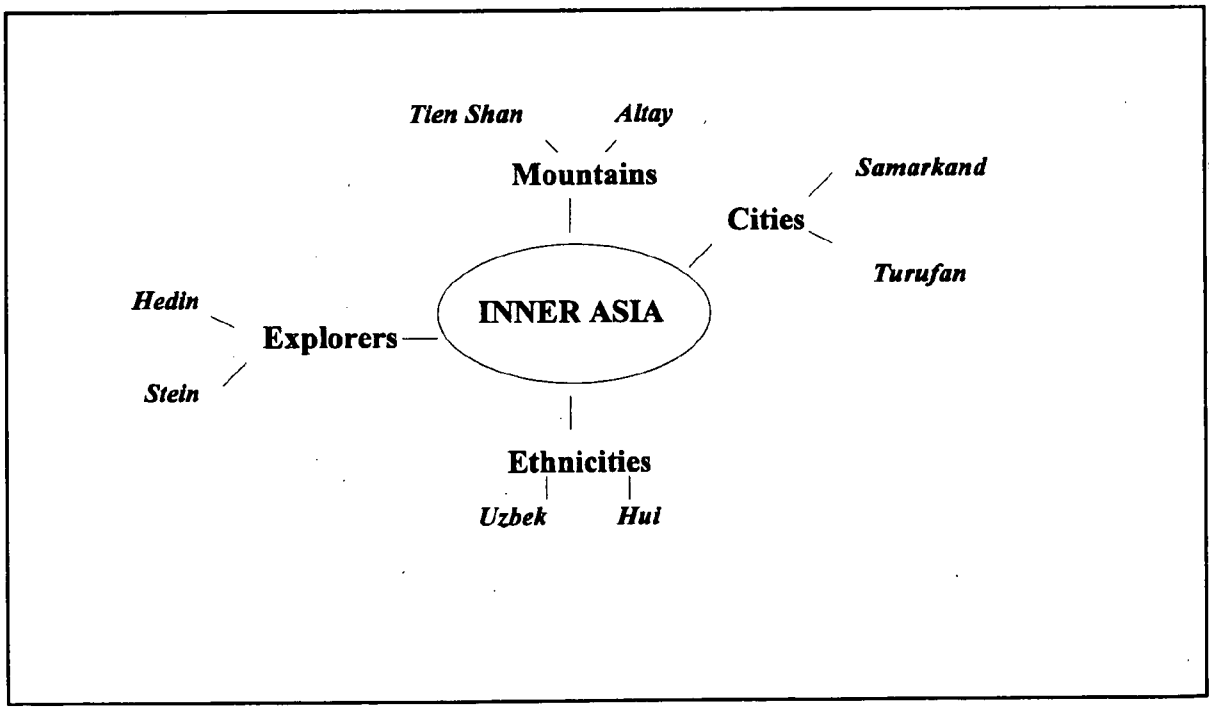
A. Tapping Prior Knowledge Skills Strategies

a. Semantic Mapping

This activity provides the teacher with a quick assessment of the students' background knowledge. It is also an excellent framework for introducing new vocabulary and concepts. From the students' point of view, the activity helps them to recall their prior knowledge and encourages them to share that with other students.

- Students are given a word, a phrase, or a concept.
- They are asked to think silently for a minute or two, jotting down any ideas or thoughts that come to mind.
- The activity is then opened to the class, and the students are asked to "brainstorm" their thoughts with fellow students.
- A map or web of ideas is developed which may be sequenced, prioritized or grouped.
- A summary activity would require the students to add new information to the map to create a written paragraph.

Sample Semantic Map



b. Anticipation Guides

An anticipation guide consists of a series of statements about the content which is to be taught. This strategy is useful in helping the teacher learn how much of the reading the student understood, what prior knowledge the student had and how this knowledge can be drawn upon on other levels. For the student, it teaches reading with curiosity and reinforces their learning through the writing process.

- At the beginning of the lesson, students are asked to complete Column A of the guide by checking whether they agree or disagree with the statements.
- Then they may work in pairs or groups to group ideas that have something in common so that they can predict what the selection will be about.
- Next they read the selection and revise their opinions based on the information they read. This information should be written in column B of the guide.

Statements are used rather than questions because students simply respond to the information. They don't have to generate information as they do when a question is asked. As students read, if their opinions are correct, they experience the "Aha!" of being right.

Sample Anticipation Guide

Part A: Before you read the selection, see how well you can **predict** or **anticipate** what you are going to learn. Base your prediction upon what you already know about the adventures of Ibn Battuta. In Column A, place a check next to each statement you believe will be proven true when you read about Ibn Battuta.

A	B	
—	—	1. When Ibn Battuta traveled to other countries, he received many gifts.
—	—	2. The followers of Ibn Battuta were well treated.
—	—	3. Ibn Battuta and his followers saw wondrous sights.

Part B: After reading about Ibn Battuta, put in check in Column B next to all the statements you believe are true. How much did the reading about Ibn Battuta improve your understanding?

Part C: Rewrite each incorrect sentence to make it correct with the story. Questions
- In your experience, what helped you make that prediction?
- What else do you know about travelers in Central Asia?
- What connection is there between travelers in this area of the world and travlers in other areas of the world? Are their conditions the same? Different?
- What other readings have you found that deal with the same problem as Ibn Battuta?

c. "What I Know" Chart

This is a versatile strategy which may be used to help students tap into their prior knowledge of a topic or of a concept. This chart enables students to think and to write about what they already know, what they have learned (from the day's lesson or from an assigned reading), and what they need to know in order to facilitate a complete understanding of the lesson or reading.

How to Use the "What I Know" Chart

- Distribute the chart. At the top, write a key question.
- Have students brainstorm all they know about the topic. They write the information in Column I, What I Know.
- Pair students. Tell them to share all they know. Add new information to column I, What I Know.
- As students are doing this, the teacher should circulate and ask generic questions which encourage students to be more specific, point them in other directions.
- Tell them to place a dot (○) in front of everything about which they are sure.
- Next, tell them to generate a question for every item about which they are not sure. Categorize questions. This may be done in groups, pairs, or individually.
- Write ALL the questions that have been generated on the blackboard.
- Direct the students to begin reading about the topic or to begin listening for answers to the questions as the lesson develops.
- As students read or listen, they should answer as many of their questions as they can. These answers are placed under *What I Now Know.*
- Discuss answers and identify what puzzles students or what they are curious about. Identify what original questions remain unanswered. Write these questions under *What I Need/Want to Know.* Answers to these questions can be researched.
- Then, and this is very important, ask, "What did you learn that you did not have questions for?" This information can be added under *What I Now Know.*
- Finally, provide the students with time to answer the key question.

Question: _____

What I Know Chart		
What I Know	What I Now Know	What I Need/Want to Know
		Answer to Question: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

B. Vocabulary Strategies

a. Vocabulary Acquisition (Please note Glossary of terms on page 16, valuable for study in this guide.)

Our students need to acquire a "social studies" vocabulary— language intrinsic (key) to the subject matter such as imperialism, democracy, etc. At the same time they must expand their vocabulary to include generic (core) languages – e.g. benefits, visuals, etc. The teacher can assist them by creating *dual glossaries*:

Key words are words which relate directly to social studies material and which are intrinsic to the content. Some examples of key words include: imperialism, nationalism, feudalism, topography, scale, Lutheranism, etc. Core words are words that are generic to the language and not necessarily content specific. Examples of core worlds include: advantages, monarch, judicial, visuals, etc.

One strategy for vocabulary acquisition is to create a chart with headings: Words, General Class (key of core), Definition, Extra Information. As new words are added to the students vocabulary, they complete the chart and create sentences using both key and core words. With this "testing" mechanism the student will have immediate use of the language and feel more comfortable.

In this curriculum guide, we have compiled a separate glossary which will be imperative for student referral. We have tried to group the unfamiliar terms in many categories. Please make sure the students receive a copy of the glossary if readings from this guide are used in your classroom.

b. Using Cloze for Concept and Vocabulary Development

Cloze involves the application of the psychological theory that readers fill in, complete or "cloze" gaps in comprehension to give meaning to what they read.

Procedure

- Choose a passage of about 300 words. Leave the first and last sentences intact—no deletions.
- Delete every nth word (or) Delete verbs, nouns, repositions or other part of speech (or) Delete key words.
- Distribute the passage to students. Have them fill in the missing words using the four column guide or give them choices of words that will fit in the blank.
  (1) Student fills in the word he thinks is appropriate in Column I.
  (2) Class is divided into groups of 4. All words selected by group are entered in Column II.
  (3) Group reaches consensus of best word which is entered in Column III.
  (4) Students check their word choices against words of author, found in Column IV.
- Class discussion of word choices and reasons for word choices.

Sample Cloze Chart			
Your Choice	Group Choices	Group Consensus	Author word

c. Building Vocabulary and Conceptual Knowledge

(Adapted from *Enhancing Social Studies Through Literary Strategies*; Judith Irvin, John Lunstrum, Carol Lynch-Brown, Mary Shepard; National Council for the Social Studies; Washington, D.C. Bulletin 91, August, 1995)

The vocabulary used in the social studies classroom is often as strange to our students as a foreign language. It is imperative that vocabulary acquisition become a part of our daily classroom learning and that vocabulary become related to ideas or concepts. Recent research have developed some important insights into vocabulary acquisition and vocabulary instruction. These include:

- *What it means to "know" a word*: To "know" a word, understanding must be beyond the superficial level. One method is to develop a "knowledge rating" before the students read the material, this is "reteaching" the vocabulary.

	Know the word	Acquainted with the word	Word is unknown
Mongol	_____	_____	_____
Turkic	_____	_____	_____
caravan	_____	_____	_____
Emperor	_____	_____	_____

- *The role of context in word learning*: Some learning from context occurs but is not very powerful. Nevertheless, it is useful to develop strategies which combine definitional and contextual approaches to vocabulary acquisition.

- *The usefulness of definitions*: Looking up words, by itself, does not lead to improved comprehension. This is only superficial understanding and often forgotten. To learn the word, it must be integrated into the schema of the reader.

- *The size and growth of vocabulary as the student matures*: Reading in content areas often leads to a widely diversified vocabulary but it also leads to vocabulary growth. Special social studies words need to be specifically explored in the classroom.

Simple Guidelines for Instruction: Sometimes the teachers should discuss with the students how they "figured out" the meaning of a word; sometimes the teachers should monitor the students understanding of new vocabulary. It is important to help students become independent word learners through assisting them in learning a variety of methods to acquire word meaning. Then students should use their newly acquired words in multiple ways – through associations, synonyms,

in writing, in speaking, in context. This leads to deep processing of the words. The new words must be further developed in future reading and writing assignments so that reinforcement is possible. Teachers can develop three to five new words a week by using the word for five consecutive days and have the students tally the number of times they use the new word.

An Example of Learning Strategies: You are about to use this material for teaching about Central Asia . There are many new words in these readings as well as the text book. Some of these words are: Muslims, Silk Road, caravans, archeology, nationalism. Additional words will surface. The teacher will (a) need to determine that some words are more important for student learning than others; (b) take into consideration the extent of the student's prior knowledge. Here are some suggested strategies:

- *List-Group-Label*: (Hilda Taba) In this strategy, the teacher begins by using visuals or any other techniques to generate a list of words from the students. The teacher can also use a brainstorming strategy. Then group the words: mosques, minarets, caravansarie, etc. and label each group: e.g. transportation, food, buildings. After these steps, the teacher should interpret the data by identifying similarities and differences, comparing the date to other time frames and applying the words to new situations.

- *Word Maps*: This is similar to semantic mapping, using a word as the center and developing multiple examples to build a full background picture for the definition of the word.

- *Capsule Vocabulary*: The teacher begins by preparing a "capsule" of words which relate to a particular topic: e.g. emir, bey, sultan, monarch, ruler, crown prince, etc. Students use the capsule words as soon and as often as possible both in speaking and writing.

- *Contextual Redefinition*: The teacher will select words that may be unfamiliar to the students and then presents those words in isolation, asking for a definition from the students. After the students have given their definition, the teacher presents a sentence which illustrates the meaning of the unknown word. This should be a contextually rich sentence. Students try to "guess" the meaning of the new words. Students now turn to the dictionary to verify their guesses. This process assists students in becoming independent word learners through the use of context clues.

- *Assessing Vocabulary*: After introducing new vocabulary, post-reading and writing activities are needed to determine if the students have learned the vocabulary.

C. Writing Strategies

Writing is a skill. Students can be taught to overcome their fear of writing and to write with a degree of comfort. A good part of teaching students to write is to teach a *process* of writing. It is often important to model and demonstrate for the class and then allow the students time to practice. Sometimes it is really necessary to make writing a "step-by-step" experience. Once the students acquire skills, they will be less reluctant to deal with writing in the classroom and on examinations. In order for students to develop writing proficiency, it is vital to have a writing component as part of every lesson. Sometimes the writing may only take three or four minutes and involve the students in writing a question or summarizing a paragraph. At other times, the writing can be a full period activity and students can edit each others work in dyads or groups. There are endless possibilities for introducing writing into each lesson.

a. Writing Frames

This activity can either expand on a unit theme and/or summarize information. For the student, the frame helps the inexperienced writer because it provides a format for written expression. Students who are unable to begin their writing piece can more easily overcome "writer's block." There are many different types of frames the teacher may devise for the student. In developing a frame, the teacher may write the first sentence of every paragraph or present the students with an outline and assist them in "framing" the outline into sentences and paragraphs. The writing frame sets a model for what the writing piece should look like. Modeling is an essential teaching strategy.

b. Persuasive Essays

This activity helps students sharpen their powers of persuasion by learning what good reasons are; the difference between an example and a reason; the purpose of introductory and concluding paragraphs; paragraph format. Writing skills become integrated into the content area and the students are forced to use the content discussed in the classroom in a writing format. This moves the learning process and allows students to further integrate what they are learning into what they have learned. Students learn that writing helps them organize their thoughts and that "writing is thinking; writing is learning."

c. Learning Logs

We suggest that students receive a Learning Log every day, completing it in class or for homework. The Learning Log provides a framework for summarizing the day's work, placing responsibility on both the learner and the teacher. For the student, the log cements the day's learning, clarifies questions that may still remain and makes student responsibility an integral part of the learning process. It models the process that good learners use. The student is forced to think about what he/she learned, did not understand and would like to know more about. The teacher should review the logs for feedback as to how well the students have learned the material, what information must be clarified, and what additional information would be of interest to the students.

Learning Log Form

Directions: At the end of the lesson each day it is important to think about what you have learned. This activity will help you remember the day's learning while it is still fresh in your mind.

1. Today's lesson was about _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. I learned that _____

_____

I also learned _____

_____

_____

3. One thing I do not understand is _____

_____

_____

Another thing that confuses me is _____

_____

_____

4. I want to know _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Name _____

Class _____ Date _____

d. Journals

Journals are versatile learning tools. They tell teachers how individual students are progressing, what needs clarification, and what is understood. Journal writing requires students to process the learning of the lesson immediately, to acquire ownership of the information, to capture "fresh" insights, and to speak directly to the teacher.

An easy way to introduce either type of journal is by modeling. Compose a sample journal entry on the blackboard or on an overhead transparency. Share your thinking with the class. Let students *hear you think and make corrections and changes.* Then, let students talk about what they will write before they write their own journal entries.

Journal writing has many uses. It can be assigned to summarize lessons, for homework, as a "Do now" that provides a bridge from the previous day's lesson or as notes for absent students to consult. When the teacher reads the journals, (s)he responds to them as if (s)he were talking to the student. Since journal writing is "free" or spontaneous, and not revised, spelling and grammar do not "count."

Good readers employ a number of strategies to make sense of the material they are reading. Some of these strategies include paraphrasing, asking questions, seeing pictures (visualizing), making predictions and revising them, having feelings, making connections to other things the reader knows and recognizing signal words like, but, however, and, therefore.

Directions: Divide your paper in half by folding it from top to bottom. From the reading, select and copy a few sentences *that interest you.* Write them on the left side of the paper. On the right side, write your ideas about the selections you chose, i.e., your questions or what you think the selection means, what the writer helped you to see, what you think will happen, how you feel about the selection you chose, and what the part you chose reminded you about.

Double Entry Journal Sample	
This town has a great trade with people of Cairo as well as with those of all India, and the people of India trade with it. There are many important merchants in the city with great riches, and many from other countries live there also. This city is a meeting place for merchants.	*Student response: Cities seem to be centers of wealth – London, Paris, New York, Tokyo. These cities in the Central Asia were really big trading centers – lots of different people lived there – people from all over the world.*
Their womenfolk do not cover their hands, not even their queen does so, and they comb their hair and gather it at one side. More of them wear only an apron from their waist to the ground, the rest of their bodies being uncovered	*Student response: I always thought places like India and that part of the world were more modern. Now I see that people dressed for the climate in areas other than Africa. I wonder if that was true in Southeast Asia too?*

D. Review Strategies

Our students today need "speedy practice." Material must be reviewed frequently during the lesson. Working informally in dyads (pairs) and triads (threes) is a useful method to allow students to review. The teacher should allow the students to share several times throughout the lesson. Students will be more inclined to tell a peer if they do not understand than to make an announcement for the whole class. These quick, small groupings will give the students the opportunity to develop questions which they might not ordinarily ask.

Dyads and triads are also positive and fruitful to start a lesson. Students can be asked to review the most important points of the previous lesson. This can be done either with or without their notes. The more habitual the review procedure within the context of the lesson, the more responsive students will be to utilizing previously covered material.

a. Organizers

Many of our students are unable to organize the material we present in the classroom. In an active classroom, so many things are happening concurrently and students often cannot discern between the important and the trivial. Organizers are useful because they help the student differentiate among the many issues discussed in the classroom. Organizers are useful for students because they are primarily visual. Our students, products of television, videos and movies, are primarily visual. Charts and graphs, as well as cartoons and line drawings are found throughout the guide. The following organizers can be created for the students:

- Grouping and labeling organizers
- Generic organizer using titles and topics
- Flowchart organizer
- Acronym organizer
- Visual organizers: trees, flower garden, maps, rivers of thought, etc.

The teacher may find it necessary to periodically stop to check the students' learning by helping the students organize the material. These organizers should be left on display in the classroom as the students work through the unit. It is a visual record of what has been covered and allows the students to "see" the work they have accomplished. Students should be encouraged to develop their own organizers after models have been introduced to the class.

E. Involvement Strategies

a. Cooperative Learning

All current educational research tells that students learn more, learn better and remember more if they are involved in the learning process. Cooperative learning can be as simple as all the groups reading the same material and responding to questions in their groups, to a "jigsaw" technique where different groups read different materials related to the topic and either respond to the same questions or different questions. In either case, the students are responsible for their own learning.

A "How-to" for teachers follows. It is suggested that the teacher introduce the procedures and techniques of cooperative learning independent of the first cooperative learning lesson. This will allow the students time to review what is expected and resolve procedural issues prior to the lesson.

A "How-To" for Cooperative Learning

- Heterogeneous, not homogenous, grouping is desirable. Try to compose groups with both weak and strong students. When you are beginning cooperative learning, it is suggested that the groups remain permanent until students become more familiar with the mechanics of the strategy. Once cooperative learning becomes a part of the classroom routine, the teacher can rearrange the groups and assemble new groups. Students should be grouped as randomly as possible. Grouping techniques include:

  (a) drawing the same number, symbol, color etc., from a bowl, bag or desk
  (b) "counting-off" students (1-2-3-4; 1-2-3-4)
  (c) distributing written assignments to students and grouping them by assignment

- Make sure that each group has a carefully structured task which will result in a product. Groups may have different readings and the same assignments; they may have the same reading and different assignments. The combinations are determined by the teacher who engineers the lesson.

- The group may or may not select a leader, depending upon the nature of the assignment, the instructions of the teacher and the needs of the group. However, all members of the group must be encouraged to read aloud and participate in the activity. This participation may not occur when groups are first selected. Be patient – peer pressure will bring the recalcitrant student into the group.

- The individual is to be held accountable within the group by members of the group. But there should be group rewards so that everyone in the group "wins" and there are no "losers."

- As the students will be working toward mutual goals, individual as well as interpersonal skills are stressed. Students should be encouraged to join their group and start work promptly. Groups should assemble as they enter the room and get "on task" immediately.

- Students in the group should be encouraged to share resources, materials and ideas -- discussing vocabulary questions, concepts or comprehension. Discussion should be encouraged among the group members and the teacher should learn to live in a classroom where there is some noise.

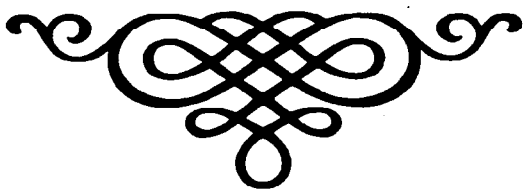
- Try to create some competition among the groups. Although cooperation is stressed, there is value in competition. Team competition can win bonus points and assist students in grade improvement.

- The teacher serves as a facilitator, a resource and an observer. The teacher may join in a group for a short period of time and may assist the students in their various roles. It is advised that the teacher set limits so that the task assigned can be achieved by all.

- Closure activities can involve all members of the group as members are called upon to justify their answers, support their evidence and identify the attributes which led to the group decision. Even students with reading disabilities will be able to take part in the discussion.

- Cooperative learning lessons require organizational effort by the teacher. Readings must be carefully selected for high interest, relevance to topic and readability. Questions must be carefully delineated and the task clearly defined. Preparation will lead to a memorable learning experience for students.

Cooperative learning lessons can create busy and often noisy classrooms. The teacher must learn to exist in a situation which sometimes may appear chaotic. However, the students can emerge from these situations with outstanding insights. It is important for the teacher to create classrooms which are "risk-free" for their students. In participatory classrooms students feel less inhibited and more in control of their learning process.



SUGGESTED TEACHING APPROACHES

Part I: How Can One Imagine Inner Asia Geographically?

A: Landscape and Climate

- **Map Study:** In any classroom discussion of landscape and climate, it is imperative that the teacher use maps in conjunction with the readings. We have provided multiple maps (political, geographic, etc.) and others can be adapted and created from these templates. Since most teachers and students are unprepared to understand what they will be reading without the use of graphics, it is suggested that an introductory map skills lesson precede the reading. This will allow the students to (a) become familiar with the place names used in the readings (see Glossary for further assistance) and (b) help the students mentally locate the location. We also believe it would be very useful to reproduce the maps as transparencies. Using an overhead projector, the teacher can superimpose one map on another, showing students how and/or if geography and political boundaries are congruent or possibly the cause of potential danger for the state. Other questions exploring the relationships between place (geography) and time (history) can also be devised to stimulate classroom discussion.

- Once the students feel a degree of comfort, a good activity would be for the students to plot the journey of explorers like Aurel Stein or Sven Hedin. This could be followed by "dating" each of the expeditions and annotating that information with the year of the expedition, the number of carts, camels, etc. required by the leaders, and the accomplishments. It is also valuable to cite some of the hardships they encountered. Comparable visuals have been created in contemporary assaults on Mt. Everest and other adventure-laden activities.

- Throughout the readings, there is a strong emphasis placed on water – both the need for water to be carried by the expedition and the quest for water. Students can research some water issues which would relate to this topic: the scarcity of water in large parts of the world, the need for "safe" water, the prevalence of water-borne diseases, the importance of water for an environment. Many of these topics are discussed in other classrooms and these disciplines (e.g. Earth Science, Ecology, etc.) are valuable additions to the classroom discussion.

- In spite of all their travails, these explorers moved on. Students could construct a "diary" trying to replicate the feelings they had during these difficult days (Aurel Stein was a great diarist and letter writer and students might wish to research his writings.)

- An interesting classroom debate could center on several issues: (a) Do we owe these men a debt of gratitude for their amazing courage? (B) What do you think propels man to try to overcome the elements in search of these historic remains? (C) If you had lived at that time, would you have wished to be part of such an expedition?

B: Settlements and Dwellings

- There is currently a good deal of material available on the Silk Road and all of these readings, visuals, CD Roms and other curricula are valuable assets to helping students learn more about this famous route. SPICE has an excellent curriculum called ***Along the Silk Road***. The Internet has multiple sites dedicated to materials on or about the Silk Road or locations along the route. These can be accessed through any good search engine (askjeeves.com; google.com). Students can be assigned to work in groups and research different aspects of the Internet sites about the Silk Road.

- Students could create their own "Silk Road" through a large chart or by examining travel brochures and magazines and collected pictures which can depict the Silk Road. As they move along the "road" they can append pictures to a large classroom map (adding images of material culture which were found at each of the sites – objects, shells, coins, scrolls, books, statues, old glass – all of this can be found in old issues of National Geographic and some can be taken offline from web sites dealing with archeology) and make annotations based on the questions suggested below:

  (a) If it is a "road," what regions did it traverse? What obstacles did it encounter?
  (b) Is it a "silk" road or did it carry many other goods? How did it get the term "Silk Road?" What other goods were used in trade along this route?
  (c) In reality, what was a caravan? What were the component parts? How did it get organized? Who was responsible for "creating" these caravans? What were the pitfalls involved in being part of a caravan? What could happen if you were **not** part of a caravan?

- Many of the documents unearthed by these explorers are in lost or forgotten languages. It would useful for students to research some examples of these languages. If they are successful, they draw up a trade list, using the languages of the regions the caravans passed. This would show how language transmission was an important by-product of the "Silk Road." Students could construct a travel account, changing the languages as they move east or west across Central Asia.

- Bokhara and Samarkand remain living testament to the great cities of Central Asia. Students should spend time examining these cities during their heyday. Again, sites are available on the Internet and many museum sites throughout the world have resources and images from these locations. Students can download that material as well as collect travel brochures and other materials to develop large montages of Bokhara and Samarkand during the time of their splendor. It is also important for students to consider the fate of these cities today and the role their governments are playing in preserving these marvelous cultural heritages. Organizations like UNESCO can provide some information since they have designated 630 World Heritage sites around the globe.

- Since Bokhara and Samarkand are two important locations in this region, have the students discuss the role of the bazaar in 1200 and the role of the bazaar today. What was sold in the bazaar? Where did it come from? How was life lived by the travelers who passed through these cities? How was life lived by the city dwellers? To what degree did the architecture reflect the life and the environment of the region? What traditions were brought to these cities from Western Asia?

- A discussion of the settlements in Inner Asia will begin a large examination of the role of Islam in this region. Students can be asked to review the development and early spread of Islam, with particular attention to the requirements of the faith. When students do a deeper analysis of the region in the next section, they will then begin to understand how the movement of Islam into Central Asia brought several adaptations to the religion. The early reading in this portion refers to the *waqf*. Students need to understand the role this institution played in the life of the city and its inhabitants.

- The last reading in this section turns the reader's attention east to the port cities of China. Have students (again by map) follow the goods of the Silk Road once they had reached their terminus in Chang'an. How were goods then transported throughout the Chinese empire? What goods were particularly favored and in great demand? What evidence can we find in Chinese writing of the period that life in China would have been seriously diminished without the goods that came from the West? What did China have to offer in exchange for the goods from the north? Again, students could create a trade card, demonstrating how interaction between the east and west is continuing evidence that China (as all of Asia) was consistently involved in global interactions and not "isolated," as earlier history has led us to believe. Through maps, students could use arrows to trace the goods and ideas which spread east and west across this huge landmass.

Part II: How Did Movement Across the Region Influence Cultural Interaction?

A: Migration: Explorations, Quests and Conquests

- The first two selections in this section (*Women Warriors: A Matriarchal Society, The Mummies of Urumichi)* can be vehicles to have students inquire about the role of archeology in the social sciences. Again, there are many Internet sites which deal with archeology and students can investigate one or two and determine what an archeologists does and how he does that task. Students need to understand(a) how burial mounds are found and then excavated (b) the methods used to date the contents of mounds (what is considered justifiable evidence to allow the scientist to reconstruct the life style of the people found in the mounds) (c) based on the contents of the mounds, what were the spiritual beliefs and attitudes about life and the after-life (d) the differences between and male and female burials (e) the importance of textiles at burial sites.

- *From Desert to Oasis* states that "the rise and fall of empires has been due largely to conflicts between these two ways of living." This is an excellent debate topic and can be used repeatedly as students study different regions of the world. They can also cross-reference: e.g. the fall of the empire of Alexander the Great and the fall of the empire of Kubilai Khan. Another short but interesting statement is , " Depending on politics and climate, these two systems waxed and waned..." Ask the students to analyze that comment and give examples for any area of World History.

- The very long reading, *Life Along the Silk Road* has extraordinary potential. The book is reminiscent of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, relating multiple tales in different voices. It can be read using the technique of Reader's Theater, with different students reading each role; it can be re-written as a dialogue among the people who lived and worked on the Silk Road. They can also be animated in a storyboard or as cartoons. A debate can be developed between the men and women who lived on the Silk Road, focusing on the roles of each throughout time. The Soldier's story would be an interesting writing exercise. His experience could be converted into a series of letters which he sends back home to Tibet, sharing his hardships and discomfits with his unseen family. Ethnic issues can be highlighted through the role of Kumtugh, the Uighur, and the loneliness and fear of the Chinese princess, Taihe, can be discussed by the class. The tale of the monk, Chudda, and the nun, Miaofu, are good departure points for a deeper examination of the role of Buddhism on the Silk Road. Lastly, Larishka, the courtesan shows a different aspect of life. Her story can be related to music and song. The richness of this resource will allow a creative teacher to develop multiple activities from both the original text and any form when it is re-written.

- Central Asia was a repository of Islamic learning which traversed the land mass from west to east and then back again. Many of the ideas from the ancient civilizations of the Greeks and the early Arabs were incorporated into the libraries of Central Asia. Textbooks focus on the great thinkers of the West while those who developed from the Islamic world are often left nameless. Students can research Avicenna and Al-Biruni to demonstrate how they played a major role in transferring learning into these inland cities. This would be a good opportunity for students to compile a list of **all** the great thinkers, philosophers and astronomers of the medieval period — men and women from Europe, Asia, Africa, and even North and South America — to help them realize that ideas did not only emanate from the West but that there were often parallel fields of thought around the world. This would allow students to think in terms of comparing the West and the East, not with any preconceived notion that one region surpassed the other, but, instead, to realize that thinking was a global event. In the field of astronomy, in particular, we know that Asia had a long interest in the stars

and planetary movements and some scientists were encouraged to consider serious study in that field. Finally, the statement, "The astronomical programs carried out in the Muslim lands between the 9th and the 15th centuries were far more extensive than anything carried out by the ancient Greeks..." is worthy of deeper contemplation and research.

- Travelers' accounts are always fascinating reading. First of all, they are contemporary re-visitings of what was just or experienced just prior to the writing. The accuracy of what the traveler sees or how he interprets what he sees must be carefully examined. Then there is the issue of selective observations. Although the traveler has **been** to a place, he has not necessarily seen the place. We all know that if we had five people view the same event or visit the same place, there would be an enormous diversity in their accounts. All of this is equally true of the great traveler accounts which have been passed down in history as being, accurate accounts of a place at a specific time. It is an interesting exercise for students to compare a traveler's account to that of a historian or a political scientist or an anthropologist to help clarify the fidelity of the traveler's report. Traveler's accounts abound throughout history – Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta and others – but the question which is constantly raised is that which we refer to above. Students can experience this themselves. They can be required to visit a zoo or an historic site in their city. Each student can then write an account of what they have seen and these accounts can be compared. It is interesting to see how wide the discrepancies are in each account! This gives students the opportunity to understand first-hand the difficulty with using these accounts as pure "factual history." In the reading presented here, Ibn Battuta speaks of the hospitality he encounters on his travels. A project for students would be to compare examples of hospitality in different cultures to give us greater insights into a culture and a society.

- Turks maintain they have been maligned in the history books. They are so often depicted as cruel conquerors. This image continues to haunt Turks today and, in many cases, has created antagonism between Turkish immigrants in Western Europe and their hosts. Most of Central Asia has been inhabited by Turks and Turkic minorities have had an enormous influence in the region, as has the Turkish language. The reading, *The Cradle of the Turks*, allows the teacher to raise some interesting questions regarding the Turks: (a) What have been the prevailing attitude toward the Turks in Central Asia throughout history? (b) How effectively did the Turks interact with other ethnic groups? (c) What is used to define the Turks as an ethnic group – language, customs, life style? These questions can also be applied to a study of the Kazakhs. In China many years ago, Chinese nationalities had to declare their ethnic status to receive certain rights and privileges. Initially hundreds of groups joined together but with time the Chinese were able to define 55 ethnic groups. The basic question that students should investigate is what are the parameters used to define ethnicity.

- The account of the Timurid Legation to the Ming Court is another example of a contemporary account. This reading recognizes the sumptuous quality of the Ming court, specifically listing all the riches the Chinese have available for their emperors. More than anything, this reading speaks of the **tribute** all foreign emissaries were required to pay to the Chinese. This tribute system was the underpinning of Chinese relations with foreigners. Students can explore the significance of the tribute system as a method of keeping one's enemies at bay. It is also exciting to read the Emperor's accounts of these "gifts" and Chinese attitudes toward an outsider's tribute.

B: Trade and Material Exchange

- It would be interesting for students to construct a trade map. This would show the actual goods that were exchanged along the Silk Road. This could be accompanied with a graphic depiction of the languages as they crossed and re-crossed the Silk Road, as well as the ethnic origin of many of the merchants. A graphic organizer in the form of a map or chart can help student make concrete what they have been reading.

- The readings on silk, trading horses, weaving and weavers as well as dyers would be excellent starting points for some writing exercises. Students can "become" one of these traders along the road and write a letter, a newspaper editorial, a traveler's account or a diary recounting their experiences. Attempts to humanize activities which took place in these distant lands could assist students in realizing that this area was inhabited by ordinary people involved in ordinary tasks. The traders could create their own bazaar and "trade" their goods. When possible, students could assemble pictures (available from National Geographic and various travel magazines) which show contemporary people engaged in the same tasks.

- An examination and discussion of textiles will provide a deeper dimension to an understanding of the riches of Central Asia. The teacher or the students can visit a local museum to get slides of textiles. This can also be done with post cards which are photographed and made into slides. Specific patterns can be enlarged to show how the people of Inner Asian abstracted and conceptualized patterns so they became symbolic and represented many of the activities of their lives. The patterns were repeated for centuries, providing an iconography through textiles, especially weavings and embroideries on silk since the fiber was sturdy and resilient. The age of some of these textiles is remarkable, as is the vibrancy of the colors. Students can research the patterns which are repeated through time and space. A discussion can be devoted to the craftsmanship required to make textiles of this complexity (something which is still done in large parts of the "Third" world). This type of discussion will lead to the issue of employing children for many of these tasks. In some societies it was the young girls because of their small and dextrous hands while the boys became the dyers. This continues to occur today and is a matter of vast concern for United Nations agencies. The important concept to emphasize is that textiles, like ceramics, sculpture and paintings, are an important art form which help carry forward the culture of a region. Rugs and carpets became moveable art objects but they were also wrappings for cargo on camel caravans.

C. Religion and Information Exchange

- *A Melting Pot of Religions* sets the stage for the realization that Inner Asia was a major conduit for religious ideas. If students have created a trade and language map, they can now insert a religious aspect, showing the movement of philosophical ideas across the region. All of the readings in this section speak of different religious groups who moved, settled and converted throughout the region. In fact, Richard Foltz refers to religion as another "commodity" which was carried on the Silk Road. That would be an interesting phrase to use with students and measure their reaction to the term.

- With this in mind, students could develop a chart or a time line showing when each "religion" entered Inner Asia, who were the early converts, why the religion had an appeal for specific people, and the extent of the influence of that religion on the region. Although a chart can be simplistic, is can also serve to clarify many disparate ideas which may be confusing students. Any kind of organizer is valuable since so many of the students need to visualize more abstract ideas.

Religion	Early Followers	Date(s)	Location/Route	Impact
Buddhism				
Mahayana				
Hinayana				
Kushan				
Indian				
Chinese				
Judaism				
Khazar				
Bukhara				
Manichaeism				
Christianity				
Nestorianism				
Shamanism				
Islam				

Students can discuss/debate some of these questions:

- In your opinion, what geographic and historic factors contributed to make Inner/Central Asia a melting pot for many religious beliefs?
- What evidence can we show that Buddhism had many different strands and many points of origin? How did they differ? What would you characterize as some of the common strains of Buddhism?
- How does the reading about Xuanzang help explain Aurel Stein's fascination with that time in history?
- What were the major accomplishments of Xuanzang?
- Why do you think the Emperor of China accepted Buddhism?
- How can we explain the acceptance of Judaism by the Khazars?
- What was the influence and impact of Judaism on Central/Inner Asia?
- Compare and contrast the life style and habits of Jews and Muslims in Central Asia.
- To what degree is Manichaeism a synthesis of other religious ideas?
- Christianity, Manichaeism, Nestorianism: what common sources do they cite and how do they evolve from that point?
- How influential was shamanism in Central Asia?
- How is Islamic expansion linked to economic expansion in Central Asia?
- How would you describe the legacy of Islam in Central Asia?
- Why did some of the Golden Horde convert to Islam? How did they adapt Islam to their needs?

D. Culture and Customs

- Students need to fully understand the importance of horses in Central Asia. The mountainous terrain and the lack of truly abundant fodder made the raising and employment of horses important. Even the early Chinese Emperors were aware of the sturdy, fast horses available in the area. Students could research the evolution of the horse both as an animal for labor and for transportation. The role that horses play in nomadic culture is evident but students can explore the relationship between men and their horses vis-a-vis the culture. Another interesting discussion could be the comparison between the horse and the camel in the hierarchy of animals. It is often said that nomadic people could make their camels "sing" and their horses "talk." To what degree can we gather evidence to show the interdependency of man and beast throughout history in Central Asia. In the section on the Mongols, *The Secret History of the Mongols* speaks of horses and horsemanship in nomadic culture. That could be a good starting point for student discussion. The second reading on chariots raises the question of this means of conveyance for nomadic peoples as well as the extension of this vehicle to Central Asia.

- How do you raise children? What an age-old and cultural issue found in all parts of the world! Students can begin this discussion with the values in their own households regarding child rearing. These can be placed in the larger setting of American cultural values and role of the child in society. The students can compile a list of practices found in this poem – teaching children virtues, marrying the girls at a young age, caution with strangers – and compare child-rearing practices from multiple cultures. The poem then expands the list of rules to include feasting practices and the governing people and that expansion can be a continuation of a classroom activity or writing exercise.

- Ceremonial practices seem to survive governments. The reading *From the Cradle to the Grave* as well as *Marriage of a Prince* examine the role of ritual in more traditional societies. This role is barely affected by governmental forces. Marriage and birth rituals are ageless and always wonderful classroom discussion issues. Since so many of our classrooms are multicultural, students enjoy discussing their traditional practices as well as the controversy caused by the clash of traditional and modern in their own households. Students can bring in newspaper articles which refer to this concern as well as relate stories from their personal history. A third reading, *Marriage Customs in 17th c. Persia* provided additional information for this exchange of ideas.

- In the section on Trade and Material Culture, there is a reference to the role of textiles in explaining culture. In *Reading the Weaves of Kilim* , the importance of rugs as a cultural conveyer is restated. Photographs of kilims need to be provided so that the class can see the repetition of patterns, the variety of fibers in a kilim, the subtlety of the colors and the value of a kilim as a currency for nomadic peoples. Kilims also differed in urban and rural settings as to use, precision of weaving, coloration, iconography, etc. How do kilims reflect all these aspects of culture in Central Asia? Why is it often easier to "read" a kilim than a poem or a story from the region? How is a kilim an example of the artistic heritage of a culture? Most importantly, as mentioned earlier, the concept of art needs to be expanded to include a realization that we often learn as much from material culture as we do from the written word.

- The remaining readings related to hospitality, food, music and weather are provided to help teachers work with students in expanding their understanding of life in Central Asia. They are more "people-oriented" readings and, hopefully, more accessible to the interests of the reader. Students can again compare these specific aspects a these cultures to their own and can write dialogues between people of Central Asia and their own family. Cookbooks can be compared and recipe books can be researched or developed. Folk songs can be catalogued and musical instruments examined.

Part III: How Did the Mongolian Conquest and Empire Influence Inner Asian History?

The format for the teacher's guide in Part III differs from the one used in the previous two sections. In this section, we are combining some of the readings into sample lessons for teachers to see how some of these readings can be integrated into actual classroom settings. However, it is important to note that these "lesson plans" are for demonstration purposes and are, by no means, represented as perfected or ideal. Experienced teachers will add, subtract, or otherwise modify these suggestions based on their own skills and knowledge. However, it is important to note that each of these lessons is designed around the concepts promulgated by the World History Association and meets both national and state standards.

Lesson 1 deals with human and environmental interaction as it addresses the question: "To what extent are the Mongols a product of their environment?" Drawing on perspectives from both geography and anthropology, this lesson utilizes maps and an extended (and engaging) selection from ***The Changing World of Mongolia's Nomads.***

Lesson 2 is really a cultural geography exercise. Dealing with issues related to the transmission of culture, this lesson uses excerpts from a wonderfully interesting reading entitled, ***Bounty From the Sheep by*** **Tserendash Namkhainyambuu** (translated from Mongolian and adapted by Mary Rossabi). Because this reading is biographical, it is easily accessible to students and provides many opportunities for class discussion as students struggle to define and describe the components of culture.

The next lesson (**Lesson 3**) looks at how the Mongols created a great land empire. Here the content is viewed through the lens of history and the readings deal with ***how*** the Mongols were able to establish the largest contiguous land empire in world history and then proceed to discuss the ***enduring significance*** of the Mongol conquests. Readings and documents include selections from ***All the Khan's Horses*** and **"The Mongol War Machine"** from ***The Devil's Horsemen.***

Lesson 4 uses primary documents to describe the Mongols in the 13th and 14th century. The lesson also encourages students to assess the extent to which the accounts of contemporary 13th and 14th century travellers helped influence later western attitudes.

Lessons 5 and 6 use an interdisciplinary perspective by analyzing a literary epic entitled ***The Secret History of the Mongols*** to reveal Mongolia and its cultural values. These lessons are designed to help students "decode" literature which may seem strange and difficult at first sight. This first lesson is intended to allow students to feel more comfortable with the material and to provide a context for the actual literary excerpt. This type of strategy is effective for all students regardless of level.

These lessons were prepared by Linda L. Arkin, Director, The American Forum for Global Education.

LESSON 1

THE GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE: *WHO ARE THE MONGOLS?*

FOCUS QUESTION: To what extent are the Mongols a product of their environment?

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to define and identify the geographic features of the ***steppe***.
Students will be able to evaluate the relationship between people and their environment.
Students will be able to analyze how the environment of Mongolia helped the people of the region to develop a unique civilization.

SPRINGBOARD:

Place the following on the chalkboard and ask students to respond.

How do the physical characteristics of your region affect how some people earn a living?
Discuss the connection between the physical features and the activities that take place such as farming, fishing, hunting, manufacturing or recreation.

PROCEDURE:

*(Teacher's Note: If students are not familiar with terms such as **nomad** and **steppe**, it may be necessary to briefly explain or review these words.)*

- Distribute **Handout 1: Physical Map of Mongolia: Physical Geography Map of Mongolia.** Create groups of three or four and allow students time to complete the questions.
- Bring the class back together and summarize student findings on the chalkboard.
- An understanding of the geography gives us important insights into the history and the culture of a region. Life for people who live on an island is very different from life for those who live in a rugged, mountainous area. With much of the land covered by deserts and mountains, Mongolia's small population of 2.3 million is spread thinly over the broad steppes and deserts in an area larger than Alaska. Population density for the country as a whole is only about 4 people per square mile. About one-fourth of the population live in the capital, Ulan Bator, which is located in a river basin. How do Mongolia's physical features affect the lifestyles of its people?
- Distribute reading entitled ***The Changing World of Mongolia's Nomads***. Select several students to read this excerpt aloud to the class.

Discussion Questions

There is an old expression which claims that " Necessity is the mother of invention." Read the excerpt from and make a list of the technological adaptations that the nomads had to make in order to survive.

(a) Most cultures have a set of rituals surrounding food and hospitality. Describe the way in which Mongolian nomads welcome strangers. How do the foods that are served reflect their environment?

(b) Cultures are shaped partially by the way in which people meet their needs. From the excerpt that you read, what conclusions can you draw about the life of nomadic Mongols?

Homework Assignment

Have students write a letter to a friend in which they describe how Mongolia differs from their own area in landforms, water, vegetation and climate. Explain to your friend how the environment in Mongolia helped create a unique civilization.

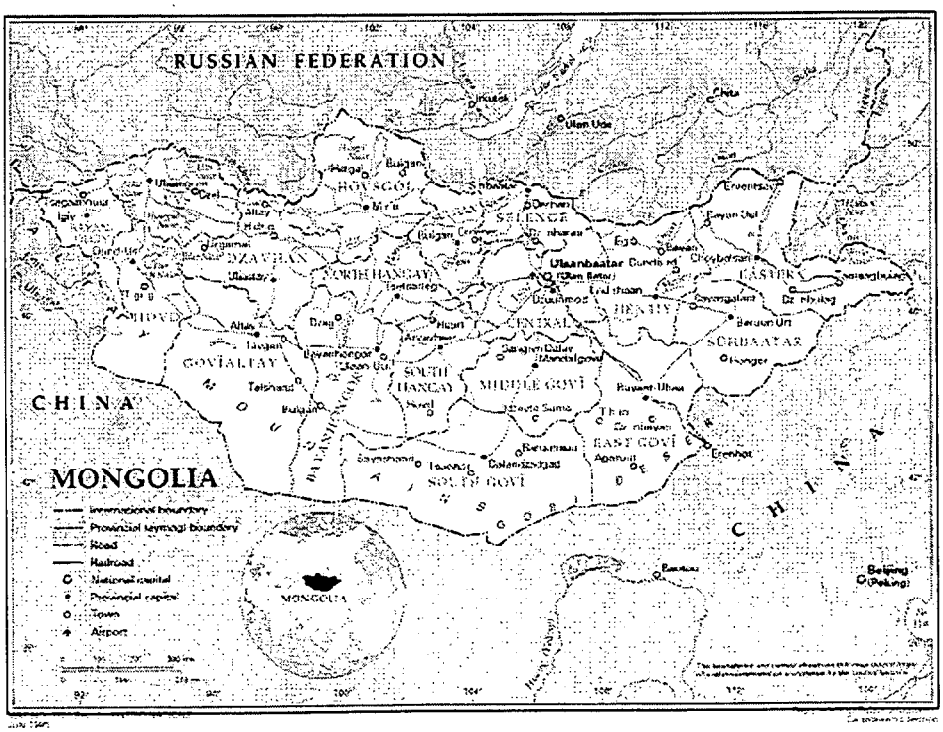
HANDOUT 1

An important theme in geography is human and environmental interaction. Geographers try to understand the relationships of places to people and to other places. All places have some positive and some negative features.

Directions: ***Work with a partner and study the map in order to answer the following questions***

1. Look carefully at Mongolia's borders. Mongolia today is a landlocked, isolated country located between China to the south and Russia to the north. What do you think are some of the challenges and potential dangers that Mongolia faces because it is wedged between these two powerful nations?

2. With much of the land covered by deserts and mountains, Mongolia's small population of 2.3 million is spread thinly over the broad steppes and deserts in an area larger than Alaska. *Steppes* are dry areas often bordering deserts. A *steppe* is generally treeless land and is ideally suited for the pasturing of flocks and herds. If you lived on the *steppe* land that is not suitable for agriculture, how would you feed yourself and your family?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Yakeshi
Zalantun
Arxan
Dzuunharaa
Sainshand
Choybalsan
Baruun Urt
Dalanzadgad

LESSON 2

THE GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE: *WHO ARE THE MONGOLS?*

FOCUS QUESTION: How is culture transmitted?

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
Students will be able to

- describe the components of culture
- explain how culture develops in a physical environment
- analyze the interaction of people and environment
- explore the contemporary challenges facing Mongolia today

(Teacher's Note: Using an extended reading from a newly translated memoir, this lesson is primarily concerned with the people and the resources of Mongolia. Students will have the opportunity to discuss the concept of culture and the effects of the interaction between people and their environment. This is really a lesson in cultural geography which can address a range of "what," "why," and "how" questions.)

SPRINGBOARD: Ask students to name as many cultural groups as they can think of. As they name groups, list them on board. Avoid defining the term "culture" because the purpose of this activity is to enable students to define term.

PROCEDURE: After they have listed a number of groups, ask what characteristics make these groups different from each other. List characteristics. (language, religion, customs, physical features, arts and crafts etc.)

- After students have mentioned as many distinguishing characteristics as they can think of, ask which of the characteristics apply to all of the groups. Students should see that very few (if any) of the characteristics apply to all of the groups.
- How is culture transmitted to succeeding generations within a society? Have students take turns reading **Handout 1 - *Bounty From the Sheep*** aloud.
- After the story is completed, ask students to note parts of the story which illustrated the role of **imitation** in the transmission of Mongolian culture. Note on board.
- Follow same procedure for examples of **direct instruction** as a means of transmitting culture. Finally, ask students to find instances when the young children were taught by **example.**
- Given the fact that it is difficult to create an absolute definition of *culture*, why do we identify *cultures* and *cultural groups*? Make certain that students understand that such identification is a way of indicating that groups of people are different and distinct from each other.

FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

In March, 2000, The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that Mongolia could face large-scale starvation as the coldest winter in 30 years continues to kill the livestock that are the mainstay of the country's rural economy. More than 1.4 million farm animals have died which seriously threatens the livelihood and food supplies of 25 percent of the people in Mongolia.

Research and report on the current situation in Mongolia by checking one of the following web sites:

http:www.reliefweb.int, http://www.nytimes.com, http://www.iht.com

LESSON 3

THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: *HOW DID THE MONGOLS LINK EAST AND WEST?*

FOCUS QUESTION: How did the Mongols create a great land empire?

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

- identify the extent of the Mongol Empire at the end of the 13th century
- assess the role of horses, military strategy and weapons
- analyze the impact of their pastoral lifestyle

TEACHER NOTES:

It is important for students to understand that the major achievement of Chingis Khan was in unifying a widely scattered nomadic people by capitalizing on the strengths of these nomadic people. As a result, he was able to unify his subjects when much of the rest of Asia was divided. Although China's population was approximately 100 million at the time, they were relatively weak and disunited and, therefore, ripe for conquest as were other regions.

*These lessons will begin with **how** the Mongols were able to establish the largest contiguous land empire in world history and then proceed to discuss the **enduring significance** of the Mongol conquests.*

PROCEDURE:

1. Distribute **MAP 4 - Empires and Territories.** Ask students to work with a partner and compare the historical map with a modern map. List the modern names of the countries which were included in the Mongol Empire at the end of the 13th century. Ask the class to think about some of the difficulties that an army of nomadic people would face in the creation of this empire which stretched from Korea to eastern Europe. Brainstorm some of the challenges and difficulties involved in conquering this vast land area and record the responses on the chalkboard.

2. Read ***The Mongol War Machine*** and ***All the Khan's Horses.***

- Why did horses play such an important role in the success of the Mongols?
- What technological improvements did the Mongols devise to make their armies more effective?
- How does the battle of the Kalka River illustrate the Mongol battle tactics?
- Describe the weapons carried by the soldiers in the heavy cavalry. What do you think would be the major difficulty for the riders?
- One of Chingis Khan's commands to his soldiers was not to shed the blood of rival princes. From what you have read in this account of the battle, was this a compassionate order or not? Discuss.

3. In ***The Mongol War Machine***, James Chambers claims that in the 13th century the Mongol army was the best army in the world. From what you have read in these two readings, discuss the military and cultural factors that contributed to the success of these nomadic people.

- Even though the Mongols might fight among themselves, they realized that they were dependent on trade. As a result, it was essential for them to secure trade routes and to ensure the safety of merchants passing through their lands. Discuss trade as a unifying element and cite examples from

other regions.

SUMMARY:

Based upon what you have read about the Mongols, write a brief essay discussing how the harsh environment of the steppes, their tribal beliefs and their pastoral lifestyle all contributed to their success in creating a great empire.

FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

Read the following:

> *"Big domestic mammals ...revolutionized human society by becoming our main means of land transport until the development of railroads in the 19th century. Before animal domestication, the sole means of transporting goods and people by land was on the backs of humans. Large mammals changed that: for the first time in human history, it became possible to move heavy goods in large quantities, as well as people, rapidly overland for long distances...The most direct contribution of animal domestication to wars of conquest was from Eurasia's horses, whose military role made them the Jeeps and Sherman tanks of ancient warfare on that continent."* (***Guns, Germs and Steel, Jared Diamond p.91***)

Do a research project focusing on the military advantages of peoples who used horses. Pay particular attention to their role in the overthrow of the **Inca** and **Aztec** Empires.

- Research other kingdoms and empires of the 13th and 14th centuries and compare the technology employed in different regions of the world. For example, you might want to look up either the **Ghana, Mali** or **Songhay** empires of sub-Saharan Africa and report on the flourishing trade routes and the trans-Saharan caravans that linked West Africa to the eastern hemisphere.

- From **A Horse of a Different Chromosome?** Oliver A. Ryder

  Although Chingis Khan's armies probably never numbered more than 200,000 troops, they may have had as many as 800,000 horses. Thirteenth-century sources, including The Secret History of the Mongols, *give a tantalizing account of the training of Mongol horses. Captured in the wild and broken-in during the first two years of their lives, the young horses were then allowed to graze for three years. At the age of five they were once again ridden and prepared for combat. The Mongols depended on their horses so much, and gathered so many of them, that John of Plano Carpini, a papal emissary to the Mongol court from 1246 to 1247, noted with amazement that "they have such a number of horses and mates that I do not believe there are so many in all the rest of the world."*

  Research the training methods outlined in these 13th century sources (many of which are included in this book), and prepare to report on this topic.

LESSON 4

THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: WHO ARE THE MONGOLS?

FOCUS QUESTION: How were the Mongols viewed by contemporary 13th and 14th century travellers?

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:
- read primary documents which describe the Mongols in the 13th and 14th centuries
- analyze the travelers' attitudes of the contemporary society they witnessed among the Mongols
- assess the extent to which these accounts helped influence later Western attitudes

SPRINGBOARD:

If you were planning a vacation or a business to another country, what kind of information would you want to learn about before you go? Where would you get such information? Discuss and categorize types of information students would want and possible sources. Emphasize the continuing importance of other travellers' accounts whether they are published in guidebooks or on the Internet.

PROCEDURES:

Today you are going to read some descriptions of the Mongols written by travelers in the 13th and 14th centuries. Distribute **Envoys' Stories of the Mongols**. Divide the class into seven groups and assign each group, one section of the reading. When they finish reading their assigned selection, students should take notes and be prepared to report on their topic. Reconvene with the whole group and complete the organizer below as a summary of all of the topics.

TOPIC	MAJOR IDEAS
Way of life and dwellings	
Food	
Fashion	
Rituals (marriage and death)	
Justice	
The Duties of the Women	
The Duties of the Men	

SUMMARY:

Have students make a two-columned form on lined paper. In **Column A,** have them list the good qualities that the Europeans found among the Mongols, and in **Column B**, for each of the qualities write a brief description of the European values on society and leadership that they reflect. Do the same for the negative qualities.

How do we form our opinions of distant countries and remote regions? How accurate is our information? To what extent did these early accounts of the Mongols help form a stereotype?

FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

Describe a travel experience you have had and write an account, including why you were travelling, what difficulties you experienced, and what surprised you.

Look at some Internet travel sites and note what information people seek before they travel nowadays. What information is similar in today's accounts? What is significantly different?

LESSON 5

THE LITERARY PERSPECTIVE: *THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS*

FOCUS QUESTION: To what extent does *The Secret History of the Mongols* reveal Mongolia and its cultural values?

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to

- list and discuss elements of folklore and epics
- identify different categories of words people use in describing someone else
- read a translated excerpt from *The Secret History of the Mongols*

TEACHER'S NOTE: *These lessons are designed to help students "decode" literature which may seem strange and difficult at first sight. This first lesson is intended to allow students to feel more comfortable with the material and to provide a context for the actual literary excerpt. This type of strategy is effective for all students regardless of level. As with any epic or myth, students will need a great deal of pre-reading background. However, once they are prepared, students will be able to follow the story easily.*

SPRINGBOARD:

Ask students to name their favorite folk stories. The teacher will record student responses on the board eliciting various elements of folklore and epics.

PROCEDURE:

ELEMENTS OF FOLKTALES AND EPICS IN WESTERN SOCIETY

- hero and heroine (handsome prince/beautiful princess)
- romantic love
- individualism
- evil man or woman as opposing force (anti-hero)
- prince must show his strength and courage

ELICIT DEFINITIONS OF ORAL STORYTELLING GENRE.

It is likely that students have studied a variety of folktales and epics in their other classes. Ask them to list the names of some of these stories and then elicit the differences between myths, folktales and epics.

- A myth is a story about gods or goddesses who are super human and who are worshipped by humans because they have power over the universe
- A folktale is a story about humans and animals who act like humans. Fables have a moral lesson.
- Epics are long narratives with many stories and episodes within them.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS.

Distribute **Overview .** Explain to students that today they are going to begin reading an historical text from Mongolia entitled *The Secret History of the Mongols.* In some ways it is similar to the folktales they have been discussing, but there are also significant differences. Use the following questions to focus the students' reading.

- What is *The Secret History of the Mongols*?
- Who are the major characters?

WHAT IS *THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS*?

- It was probably written down in Mongolian within a few decades of the death of Chingis Khan, during the middle of the 13th century.
- It is the life history of Chingis Khan.
- *The Secret History* begins in the time when the first ancestors of the Mongol tribe came across the "inland sea" and the lineage begins with a wolf and a deer and continues through several generations. It deals with family, marriage, class structure and religion among other topics.

Divide the class into 5 groups. Explain to the students that *The Secret History of the Mongols* deals with issues related to **family, marriage, class structure, friendship and religion**. Assign one of these issues to each group and ask students to make a chart outlining some of their first impressions from the text. Leave room to add to your chart as you read other sources.

HOW DO WE DESCRIBE/DEFINE PEOPLE FROM OTHER CULTURES?

1. How would you describe a "new" friend to an "old friend"? Allow students 3-5 minutes to brainstorm responses and write on board.
2. Distribute Handout 2 - What Characteristics Do We Look at in Describing Someone?
3. Have students categorize descriptors under appropriate sub-headings. Review with whole class.

READ BOOK 1 ALOUD.

As you listen to this first part, write down the descriptors that you would use to describe the Mongolian people who appear in Book 1.

SUMMARY: After reading Book 1 do a family chart of Chingis Khan.

LESSON 6

THE LITERARY PERSPECTIVE: *THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS*

FOCUS QUESTION: To what extent does *The Secret History of the Mongols* reveal Mongolia and its cultural values?

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- complete Books 2-4 of *The Secret History of the Mongols*
- identify the major values in *The Secret History of the Mongols*
- assess to what degree *The Secret History of the Mongols* helps us to comprehend Mongol values and culture

PROCEDURE:

1. Read Book 2: *The Wars in Mongolia.* The reading may be done by the teacher or by selected students. After Book 2 is finished, students can work in small groups to summarize the information. They should pay particular attention to the following questions:

   - What new information did we find today?
   - What patterns do we see emerging?
   - What values and beliefs seem important?

2. Students should complete their reading of Books 3 and 4. They may follow the same format as they did in Book 2, or they may:

   - write a news account reporting on the developing empire and the wars in Cathay and the West.
   - pretend they are one of Chingis Khan's soldiers and compose a letter to be sent to their families describing their life under the Great Khan.
   - create a brief role play between a soldier of Cathy and one of the Khan's soldiers.

3. What personal qualities and/or characteristics are most highly regarded by the Great Khan? Cite references in the text. To what extent are these values and characteristics particularly important to a nomadic people?

SUMMARY: When a young Mongol child reads ***The Secret History of the Mongols***, what lessons is he or she suppsed to learn?

APPLICATION: Students should return to their groups to develop a plan for an episode of an epic that will be read in the year 2500 by a class of high school students. Students should dramatize a code of behavior (such as cooperation or balance with nature) that they believe incorporates values important to future survival. Who will be the heroine? Hero? Who or what will be the enemy? How will the solution help future generations? Each plan should include:

- two values which are important to future survival
- a list of characters and their relationship to each other
- the setting
- a plot outline, including the conflict, rising action and climax.

Allow students adequate time to develop plans. When they have finished these episodes, each group may read its plan to the entire class for discussion and analysis.

Part IV: What Role Does Inner Asia Play in the Modern Global Society?

A. Politics and Nationhood

- In any lessons related to the "Great Game," students need to refer to maps. There would be multiple maps which would be appropriate for these lessons – maps of the British Empire when vast sections of Central Asia were under British control, maps of Russian expansion eastward and southward and maps of Chinese expansion westward. These maps, one overlaid on the other, would show areas of conflicting interest. Students could then discuss the term "Great Game." What does that mean? What was the goal? How did the objectives of this "game" fit into national politics in either Great Britain, Russia or China? The case of Afghanistan is particularly interesting. How can Britain's interest in Afghanistan (and later Russia's invasion of Afghanistan) be compared to America's involvement in Vietnam during the 1970's? Is it an accurate analogy? Why? Why not? Another interesting road to follow would be to trace the "orientalization" of Central Asia through the words of Kipling. To what extent did Kipling's point-of-view color and extend the attitudes of many Westerners regarding Central Asia? How did Kipling's position help or hinder nations in Central Asia from defining their own identity? This, of course, leads into a larger question of national identity, a question which is still current through much of the region.

- "Geography matters profoundly in international affairs." This statement from the reading *Back on the Map* is fairly intense and needs to be seriously considered in the classroom. Are nations "victims" or "victors" of their geography? The article continues by stating that a nation's policy toward regions in Central Asia is dictated by national interest, rather than the intrinsic needs of Central Asia and the people. To what extent could you agree or disagree with this statement? The most basic issue is who determined identity – is it the nation and its people or is it outside forces who construct a nation in some image and then apply that image to an area? Or, at the same time, is identity (nationhood) decided by the component parts of the populace, all of whom want a say in who they are and where they are going? The reading ends with a final provocative thought: Central Asians need to realize they are "back on the map" and their identity is one of their own choosing. This statement alone can be a good writing exercise, either as an editorial, a campaign speech or a persuasive essay.

- The theme of identity or nationhood continues in readings 3 through 6. Each explores how new nations in Central Asia are trying to either discover or create their identity. Students could develop an **assets** and **liability** chart for the region: resources, population issues, environmental concerns, leadership, public support, etc. It would soon be apparent that there are wide disparities in the "stans" and they need to be studied and understood on an individual basis. The selection of the national flag has so many hidden agendas, from the color to the symbols to the history, that they cannot just be glanced at and then dismissed. Although some flags have the same color and often the same symbol, do they mean the same thing? How does each of these new nations mythologize their history and then abstracted it for a flag? Yet flags are important and people respond to their national flag as well as their national anthem. Students could also research coins as examples of nation-building, as well as foods, textiles, folktales, etc. In totality, an in-depth discussion of the symbols of nationhood from early history to the present time would be interesting and invaluable.

- Nations other than the Western powers have been traditionally interested in Central Asia. India, in particular, is deeply concerned about the rise of religious fanaticism in congruent areas. Students can research the historic concerns of Western powers and compare them to the current concerns of India. More importantly, students can devise a "new foreign policy" for India vis-a-vis Central Asia. They can role play a model United Nations session, with students enacting various voices in determining policy in Central Asia. Students can also consider a persuasive essay propounding the cause of India as a leader in the region.

- Is the "Great Game" over? Or is it just a change in the cast of characters? This can be a topic of a lively debate which can be a continuation of suggested activities mentioned previously. Many aspects of the original game are changed including the locations now disputed as well as the resources which are desired. This kind of thinking further expands the concept that the "Silk Road" has now become the "Gas Road."

- All "games" have their dangerous side. The "stans" are perilous at times since many of the governments are authoritarian and there are also obvious Communist and Islamic influences. Even an issue which Westerns consider free will – the right to have a beard – becomes a potential for reprisals in some strongly Islamic areas. Russian influence in Central Asia remains consistent. In the reading on Afghanistan: *Central Asia's New Geopolitics*, the point is made that old alliances are disappearing as new ones develop. Students can discuss and research this concept, seeking to see why Central Asian states are finding new partners and arrangements. The question is raised: Is Central Asia important or is Central Asia important because of its neighbors? How directly or indirectly will turmoil in Central Asia affect Asia?

- Unfortunately, Americans tend to equate Islam with terrorism because of often unsympathetic press coverage and other prejudices. Islam is not a monolith. In Central Asia there are many sects which have differing agendas. Students need to find out how the many Islamic groups espouse divergent viewpoints. They need to have open dialogues with their neighbors and try to make Central Asia safer and more free of drugs. Students can read Robert Frost's poem *Mending Wall* and discuss how that poem can be a metaphor for dialogue which needs to begin in Central Asia. In conclusion, this entire section focusing on politics and nationhood requires a closer look at issues of identity and conflict management in Central Asia.

B. Society in Transition

There are two themes which are inherent in this section and they can be effectively dealt with by using many of the articles concurrently in *jigsaw cooperative learning* lessons. Actually, in a manner of speaking, the two themes are really one since they focus on the search for identity among the nations in Central Asia.

- The first theme is largely one of **external identity.** These nations are aware of their extraordinary past but are also aware that very few people in the world today know of them. The cities are often viewed as remote outposts with just minimal vestiges of their fabled past. Although we did mention previously that diplomats may consider Central Asia a part of a new "great game," it is not sought out by tourists or considered too "exotic" by others. The first two articles discuss the desire of Central Asian nations to resurrect their past, to seek new glory equivalent to their faded glory and to have a role for intellectuals in determining the fate of their nations. This raises questions of the strategy that should be employed to have these nations spotlighted for the world's attention. Students might devise some advertising or public relations campaigns for each of these nations, campaigns which would attract the attention of people around the world to the worth of each of these areas. They might make a list of the assets and liabilities of each nation for a tourism agenda. Even logos could be designed to attract people to the glories of Central Asia.

- The second theme is one of **internal identity.** The issues are: language and the question of bilingualism, the role intellectuals play in the development of a nation, the pull of ethnicity while at the same time the recognition that ethnicity is not sufficient as a method of defining oneself, personal surnames (both historical and contemporary), the growing concern with youth and youth issues, interpretations of history, the connection between rising ethnicity and nationalism, the call of separatism and the further fracturing of these newly

emerging nations, the impact of all of these fissures on cultural concerns (marriage traditions, child rearing, role of women, etc.), minority identities and the greater issue of human rights for minorities which is really the distinction between *de jura* and *de facto* treatment of minorities, and, lastly, religious conflicts. The class can be divided into groups and each group can read one of the articles. From these readings, an organizer can be created which carefully examines how Central Asians are faced with myriad questions concerning who they are and how they wish to be perceived. Although this would encompass a huge land area in Central Asia, the students will easily recognize how some of the issues cross national boundaries. Probably the most important discussion can center around how a Central Asian determines the hierarchy of identities he or she lives with. Are they first identifiable through religion? Ethnicity? National origin? Gender? Something else? This is a concern we have discussed other areas of the world and becomes a very lively classroom exercise. Students then can translate that thinking to their identity as Americans. What determines how American they are? What determines their loyalty or loyalties? These are difficult and complex questions.

C. Economy and Development

- Since much of Central Asia had been under the domination of the USSR since the end of WWII, socialist models were grafted into these Central Asian Republics as well as Mongolia. Now that the Cold War is past, Communism is merely a legacy which needs to be evaluated. This would be an interesting research topic for students. First of all, they could re-examine the impact of Communism on the Soviet Union. The second step would be to discover which aspects of the socialist state were adopted by contiguous areas. How did communist principles fit with the indigenous, largely semi-nomadic cultures of the region? The natural summation would then be to compare and contrast what happened in both the Soviet Union and Mongolia and Central Asian republics when the props of the Communist state were removed. In both cases, but with far greater attention to detail, students can trace the economic changes which have occurred over the last fifteen years. Some will be obvious (the withdrawal of Soviet financial assistance), others will be more subtle (the sale of nuclear weapons, increased drug use). Students can construct a dialogue which could take place between some "hard liners" and younger people about the benefits of a Communist economic system. This involves examining the prospects available to these new nations and their attempts at privatization and the development of a free market. What are some of the problems they are facing? What is the connection between sound economic policy and gaining the confidence of the population? This reading can segue into the issue of corruption, a common complaint in so many of these newly independent states. The article is entitled *Unavoidable Corruption.* The question that needs to be raised is why is corruption considered "unavoidable?" Students can find evidence of corruption throughout Asia and Africa where there are two economic systems – a free market based on supply and demand, or a "black market", as stated in the article, an alternative tax system. China is an excellent example for study. Since 1985 and the change in policy instituted by Deng Xiao Ping, corruption has been wide-scale. In the last two years, the Chinese officials have instituted and developed policies to prosecute corrupt officials. The institution of the "rule of law" (often based on a strong and independent judiciary) appears to be an excellent argument for alleviating the rampant corruption. Students can develop an "action agenda" which could be applied to some of the problems in the region.

- The politics of oil – the change from the Silk Road to the Gas Road – is further complicating economic issues in the region. All of the arguments outlined in *A Caspian Gamble* carefully list the problems and implications the vast oil reserves will have on these areas. Students can create a semantic map with "Oil" in the center and then spin out the connections between oil and the political, economic, social and environmental concerns of Central Asia. In particular, a full discussion of "pipeline poker" can highlight some of these issues in depth. Students should map each of these potential pipelines to visualize the complications each would create. At heart is the

major question of regional security and the national interest of each of the new nation-states. You could begin with a discussion of three major components of national interest; diplomacy, trade, and military strategy. Would the development of a free-trade zone be the answer? Does this include religious and ethnic issues? What is the attitude of many of these leaders toward the Taliban government in Afghanistan?

- The two articles on drug trafficking in Central Asia are disturbing. How has the drug trade destabilized economic life in the region? What policies must be developed? What is the connection between drug traffic and corruption? With the potential of military involvement and foreign economic aid, how might this influence issues of national sovereignty?

- Conversely, it is extremely important to present what Americans would regard as success stories. Where have these fledgling governments been successful and how have they replicated their success stories? The role of the United Nations cannot be underplayed. Students should read United Nations Development reports which are written annually from many areas. This is an attempt to update what is considered a forward economic move to improve the quality of life. How will China's entry into the WTO affect the economic situation of Central Asian minorities in western Xinjiang Province,(*What WTO Means for Xinjiang*)?These reports are available periodically and can be purchased from the United Nations. It would be an exciting project for students to gather these reports from several areas of the world and develop a chart citing all the areas where the United nations can show economic improvement. These can be categorized into issues of literacy, hunger, health, infant mortality, female mortality, clean water, agricultural development, etc. A project like this, with updates as students continue their study over a period of time, will present a larger picture of what is accomplished and what **can be** accomplished in developing nations.

- At the same time, the final article highlights areas of the world which have been forgotten. The city in Tajikistan is only one example. Others can be researched. Students can make the development of these areas a primary objective and debate what policies would work, what kind of financial commitment is needed and other critical decisions. Although it is only an exercise, it can show students the many problems that can arise when a decision is made to "fix" a city, a state or a nation. Returning to map study, students can place pins on the map where there is a need for economic assistance to improve the life of the people. Students can also discuss the nature of international economic aid and evaluate criteria that should be used in allocating these resources.

D. Environment

There is no question that economic issues often collide with environmental issues. World-wide, what are the priorities to consider when evaluating the environmental impact of industrialization? How do we establish a value for increased "sustainable development?" The environmental issues in this section fall into five major categories: wildlife and the environment, traditional life/modernization and the environment, agricultural issues and the environment, water concerns and the environment, and man-made environmental disasters.

- As populations around the world soar, there is the constant need for more land. Land inhabited by indigenous wildlife, often endangered or near extinct. The issue raised in the first article looks at the construction of an oil pipeline in Mongolia through the habitat of the Mongolian antelope. How can governments of poor or less-developed countries balance the need for foreign investment and hard currency with maintaining their natural wildlife and quality of life? Is it fair for more developed nations to dictate how another economy should develop, and can we influence multi-national corporations to follow "sustainable development" policies? You can organize

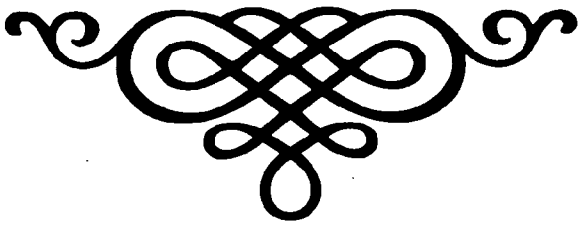
a mock environmental conference in your class, dividing students into different groups of developing nations and corporate executives. Respectively, students conduct research on the environmental impact of a project, and the economic advantages of the project, and they present and debate both sides.

- With the second article, you can include discussion of the impact on traditional values and lifestyles from industrialization. Oftentimes, families are separated, local language dialects are changed, and customs and traditions are altered. Is this really deemed progress?

- Damage to the environment has also had a tremendous impact on one of the great symbols of Mongolia; the *saker* falcon. Discussed in the third article of the section, the falcons were prized for their majesty and hunting skills, and have been written about since the days of Genghis Khan. Nearly extinct, how does humankind manage the development of land to limit the desecration of such great species?

- The next three articles focus on an issue that may define geo-political relations in the next century. The important issue is the availability of water. With the depletion of the great Aral Sea, due to the harsh impact of cotton production, and the decline of many of the regions' rivers, the people of Central Asia continue to struggle for safe, clean drinking water. Water for crops, pastures, and animals. Water to keep their eco-system and climates in balance. Control of water has become a great political issue as local and national leaders fight for the right to have access to useable water. How will the water issue affect the health, security, and development of the region? Many of these questions can be incorporated into the environmental debates described above. How does water influence certain economic issues in your neighborhood?

- The seventh, eighth, and the ninth articles highlight the impact of nuclear testing on the region's environment. Radioactive fallout has polluted many of the lakes and rivers, leading to thousands of deaths and significant environmental damage. Should nuclear testing be allowed to have this kind of effect in the interests of national security? Should these countries be encouraged to sign on to the major test-ban treaties? If so, how do the developed nations entice them into adhering to the treaties and how can it be enforced? What does it do to the region's underground reservoirs for later decades, in addition to the impact on security in Central Asia?



ONE
How Can One Imagine Inner Asia Geographically?

LANDSCAPE AND CLIMATE

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The readings in this section attempt to graphically describe the conditions early explorers encountered when they reached the deserts of Inner Asia. The rigors each of the expeditions met is a testimony to their bravery as they faced brutal climatic extremes and inhospitable landscapes.

1. *TAKLAMAKAN* - "GO IN AND YOU WON'T COME OUT"

(Peter Hopkirk, *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road*, Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984. pp. 9-13. Reprinted by Permission. Copyright © 1980 by Peter Hopkirk.)

At the end of the Ice Age the glaciers of some of the highest mountains of the world that lie in the heart of the Eurasian continent began to disappear. The streams that brought life to people were shrinking and people had to struggle for survival against death by thirst and starvation. The desert became a natural barrier between Western and Eastern civilizations of the Eurasian continent. This reading attempts to portray various impressions of the Taklamakan in different times periods.

In Central Asia's back of beyond, where China tests her nuclear weapons and keeps a wary eye on her Russian neighbors, lies a vast ocean of sand in which entire caravans have been known to vanish without trace. For well over a thousand years the Taklamakan desert has, with good reason, enjoyed an evil reputation among travelers.

Ancient Han records show that two thousand years ago the Chinese knew the Taklamakan as the Liu Sha, or "Moving Sands," for its yellow dunes are ever in motion, driven by the relentless winds that scour the desert. Present-day hydrographers and climatologists refer to it more tamely as the Tarim basin after the glacier-fed river which flows eastwards across it to shallow Lop Nor lake, the mystery of whose apparent "wandering" would finally be solved by Sven Hedin. On the map of modern China the Taklamakan (meaning, in Turkish, "go in and you won't come ou") is shown by a large egg-shaped blank in the heart of what is now officially termed the Sinkiang-Uighur Autonomous Region.

The Taklamakan and its oases are protected on all four sides from any but the most determined of intruders. To the north rise the majestic T'ien Shan. To the west lie the Pamir – "The Roof of the World." To the south stretch the Karakoram and Kun Lun ranges. Only the east is free of mountains. But there nature has placed two further obstacles, the Lop and Gobi deserts. Most British travellers (Bell and Young husband excepted) have approached Chinese Central Asia from India via the Karakoram passes which in places reach nineteen thousand feet. Hedin describes this bleak route as a "via dolorosa" because of the many lives it has claimed, both human and animal. As recently as 1950 a traveler wrote: "Never once until we reached the plains were we out of sight of skeletons. The continuous line of bones and bodies acted as a gruesome guide whenever we were uncertain of the route." In *The Lion River*, a history of the exploration of the Indus river, Jean Fairley writes:

> Nothing grows along the Karakoram route and the traveler must carry all the food he needs for himself and his beasts. Pack animals, overloaded with trading goods at the expense of fodder, have died in this pass in their millions.

Sir Aurel Stein, on the other hand, dismisses the Karakoram route somewhat mischievously as "...A tour for the ladies."

Surrounding the Taklamakan on three sides are some of the highest mountain ranges in the world, with the Gobi desert blocking the fourth side. Even the approaches to it are dangerous. Many travelers have perished on the icy passes from Tibet, Kashmir, Afghanistan and Russia, either by freezing to death or by missing their foothold and hurtling into a ravine below. In one disaster, in the winter of 1839, an entire caravan of forty men was wiped out by an avalanche,

and even now men and beasts are lost each year.

No traveler has a good word to say for the Taklamakan. Sven Hedin, one of the few Europeans to have crossed it, called it "The worst and most dangerous desert in the world." Stein, who came to know it even better, considered the deserts of Arabia "tame" by comparison. Sir Percy Sykes, the geographer, and one-time British Consul-General at Kashgar, called it "a land of death," while his sister Ella, herself a veteran desert traveler, described it as "a very abomination of desolation."

Apart from the more obvious perils, such as losing one's way and dying of thirst, the Taklamakan has special horrors to inflict on those who trespass there. In his book, *Buried Treasures of Chinese Turkestan*, von Le Coq describes the nightmare of being caught in that terror of all caravans, the *kara-buran*, or black hurricane.

> Quite suddenly the sky grows dark... ...a moment later the storm bursts with appalling violence upon the caravan. Enormous masses of sand, mixed with pebbles, are forcibly lifted up, whirled round, and dashed down on man and beast; the darkness increases and strange clashing noises mingle with the roar and howl of the storm... ...The whole happening is like hell let loose... ...Any traveller overwhelmed by such a storm must, in spite of the heat, entirely envelop himself in felts to escape injury from the stones dashing around with such mad force. Men and horses must lie down and endure the rage of the hurricane, which often lasts for hours together.

Several other European travelers, including Hedin, who lived through such storms left similar descriptions. The vital thing was to keep your head. A caravan of sixty horsemen escorting a consignment of silver ingots to the oasis of Turfan in 1905 perished when they were struck by a *buran* so powerful that it overturned the heavily laden carts. "The sixty Chinese horsemen," von Le Coq relates, "galloped into the desert where some of the mummified bodies of men and beasts were found later on, while the others had utterly and entirely disappeared, for the sandstorm likes to bury its victims." Clearly it was a case of panic by the horses if not also by the riders; but in Chinese minds such happenings were caused by the demons which they believed inhabited the desert and lured men to thirsty deaths.

Hsuan-tsang, the great Chinese traveler, who passed through the Taklamakan on his way to India in the seventh century, describes these demons. He wrote:

> When these winds rise, both man and beast become confused and forgetful, and there they remain perfectly disabled. At times, sad and plaintive notes are heard and piteous cries, so that between the sights and sounds of the desert, men get confused and know not whither they go. Hence there are so many who perish on the journey. But it is all the work of demons and evil spirits.

Sir Clarmont Skrine, who served as British Consul-General at Kashgar in the 1920s, has left a vivid description of the desert's appearance in his book *Chinese Central Asia.*

> To the north in the clear dawn the view is inexpressively awe-inspiring and sinister. The yellow dunes of the Taklamakan, like the giant waves of a petrified ocean, extend in countless myriads to a far horizon with here and there an extra large sand-hill, a king dune as it were, towering above his fellows. They seem to clamour silently, those dunes, for travellers to engulf, for whole caravans to swallow up as they have swallowed up so many in the past.

Skrine, who for two and a half years manned this sensitive listening post where three empires met – those of China, Russia and Britain – recalled speaking with an old Chinese traveller who arrived in Kashgar from "China proper" via the Gobi and Taklamakan deserts. On one lonely stretch of this journey he had marched for fifty days, he told Skrine, without seeing a soul.

Another traveller who, nearly forty years earlier, covered the three thousand five hundred miles from Peking to Kashgar was Colonel Mark Bell, V.C., Director of Military Intelligence of the Indian Army. Afterwards, Bell wrote somewhat dismissively of the Gobi. "Water can be readily obtained and is often close to the surface," he reported.

> Travellers like to make much of crossing the desert, but it has few hardships; and before we left Kashgaria we had reason to think the Gobi days pleasant in comparison with the Kashgarian desert hills and flats...

By the latter, of course, he meant the fringes of the Taklamakan which he, like most other travelers, carefully skirted.

However wisely the inhabitants conserved and controlled their water supplies, the processes of geography were working remorselessly against them. High above them in the mountains, the glaciers which fed the streams bringing them life were shrinking. Rivers also sometimes changed course or silted up, and sites had to be abandoned. One such oasis was Yotkan, the original site of ancient Khotan, which today lies buried under gravel.

Despite these hazards, the Silk Road continued to flourish. Over the years this little-known region of China has, on the maps of the day and in the memoirs of travellers, borne numerous different names. In vogue at various times were Chinese Tartary, High Tartary, Chinese Turkestan (sometimes spelled Turkistan), Eastern Turkestan, Chinese Central Asia, Kashgaria, Serindia and Sinkiang. The earlier their use, the more vague were their boundaries, although all included the Taklamakan. Some Victorian travellers called it High Asia, though this appears to have included Tibet - "The most stupendous upheaval to be found on the face of our planet," as Sven Hedin once described it.

2. THE HAUNTED DESERT OF *LOP NOR*

(Laszlo Torday, *Mounted Archers: The Beginnings of Central Asian History*, Durham: The Durham Academic Press, 1997, pp. 235-237, Reproduced by kind permission of the executors of the estate of the late Dr. L. Torday.)

The Lop desert was once the ancient bed of Lop Nor, the Lop marshes, which enjoyed an evil reputation at all times. Marco Polo took a month to cross it, marching over sandy desert inhabited, he believed, by evil spirits. Ancient Chinese texts agreed that the place was haunted by ghosts, but spoke not of desert, but of salty marshes and boundless bogs which swallowed people and beasts mercilessly. Travelers continued to disagree about what they saw here. Current research indicates that much of this area was once covered by reedy marshland, rich in fish and waterfowl. In 1906 Sir Aurel Stein, a British explorer, discovered a serviceable path over the margins of this barren wilderness and later traced in detail the ancient 120-mile route, as well as old Han-period resting places along ancient cart tracks preserved by rock-hard clay. The hardships and thrills of Stein's journey of discovery are best rendered in his own words.

We followed the incipient Lop Nor marshes. Every available camel was loaded with big bags full of ice, each load weighing between four and five hundred pounds. In addition we had some thirty donkeys laden with smaller bags of ice. They were to march beyond the last point where drinkable water or else ice was available. We passed very soon into the northern portion of the Lop desert, which consists of an endless succession of steep clay banks or terraces, separated by sharp cut trenches. They have all been carved out by the winds with the help of the sand which they drive before them and which thus serves as their instrument of corrosion. These trenches invariably run from East-North-East to West-South-West and thus clearly mark the prevailing direction of the winds. The march across those terribly hard banks and trenches of clay, over which our route took us at an angle, was tiring men and animals badly. In the midst of this forbidding eroded ground we crossed at intervals shallow depressions usually marked by rows of fallen trunks of dead wild poplars. They could be followed by the eye, winding away in the distance, just like branches of rivers before they lose themselves in the level expanse of the sandy desert. And, in fact evidence furnished by our careful mapping of all such features have led me to believe that these depressions, with strips of dead forest along them, mark the terminal beds in which the waters of the Kuruk Darya, the "Dry River" which once irrigated the land around the ruined site of Lou-lan, made their way into the marshes fringing the great dried up Lop Sea.

We had scarcely entered this desolate area when, on its wind-swept bare ground, flint arrow-heads, flint knife-blades and other small implements of the

Stone Age, together with fragments of very coarse pottery, were picked up in frequent succession. The same happened again, after intervals, farther on. Considering that search to the right or left was practically excluded, the frequency of such finds was conclusive evidence that belts of this area must have been occupied by man in late prehistoric times.

We were nearing the end of the second troublesome march across this waste of eroded hard clay when a number of small metal objects, including Chinese copper coins of the Han dynasty, with plentiful fragments of well-finished pottery lying on the ground, gave assurance that our route led here through a belt which during historical times has known human occupation, at least in places. Yet, we were, as our survey showed, still twelve miles in a direct line to the south of the ruins (of Lou-lan) traced by Hedin. [From then on] copper coins of the Han type, bronze arrowheads and other small objects had been picked out with increasing frequency when at last the first ruined mound indicating the proximity of the site was duly sighted in the distance.

3. THE QUEST FOR WATER

(Sven Hedin, *My Life As An Explorer*, Garden City: Garden City Publishing Co., 1925, pp. 147-170. Permission pending.)

The most renowned explorer of his time, the father of archaeology, Sven Hedin was intrigued by local legends of demons in the Taklamakan, guarding ancient cities full of treasures. In his travels he met several natives who had chanced upon such places. In 1895 he succeeded in making a crossing of the center of the Taklamakan, though he was one of only three members of the party who made it across. In this dramatic reading, you are aware of the extreme risk taken to explore these forbidding regions. Furthermore, it makes us aware of the importance of water physically and psychologically.

When the tanks came to be reloaded on their three bearers, the sound of the splashing water was such that I examined the supply. To my surprise, I discovered that it was sufficient for only two days. I questioned the men, and reminded them of my order to bring water for ten days. Yolchi, the guide, answered that we were within two days of Khotan-daria. I dared not scold them, for I myself should have watched how much water was taken from the lake. We had traveled only two days, and it would have been wise to retrace our steps. The caravan would have been saved, and no life would have been lost. But I could not bring myself to go back, and I reposed undue confidence in the guide. The water-rations were reduced for the men, and the camels had to go without a single drop.

From that moment, I, as well as my men, went on foot. Entire ranges, plateaus and stretches of sand extended in all directions.

The dunes were still sixty feet high. A heavy and ominous mood prevailed throughout the caravan. Conversations had ceased. There were no sounds but the sighing of the wind, the tired breathing of the camels, and the funeral tolling of the bronze bells.

On April 26, I departed along, at dawn. I held the compass in my hand, and counted my steps. Every hundred represented a gain, every thousand increased my hope for salvation. The day grew warm. The silence was deeper than in a graveyard. Only the headstones were wanting. The sand-ridges now mounted to a height of one hundred and fifty feet. The exhausted camels had to get over them all. Our situation was desperate. At noon, the sun was like a glowing oven. I myself was dead-tired. I had to rest for a while. But no! First another thousand steps, and then rest!

We camped on a small spot of hard clay-ground. I gave up pitching my tent. We slept under the open sky, all of us. The nights were still cold. We were always in higher spirits when settling down for the night, than in the daytime; for then came rest, the distribution of water, and the evening coolness after the heat of the day.

At six o'clock I said to the men: "Let us dig for water." Everyone was inspirited by this. Kasim took a spade, and straightway began to dig. Only Yolchi, the guide, made fun of the others, saying that water might be struck here at thirty fathoms. They asked him where the river was which he had said we would reach in four

days. He was put to shame further, when, at a depth of three feet, the sandy ground became moist.

The tension grew indescribably. We worked, all five of us, as though for our lives. The wall of sand thrown up around the well grew in height. The sand had to be hauled up in a bucket. At a depth of four and a half feet, the temperature of the sand was 55 degrees, as compared to 84 degrees in the air. The water in the tanks was warmed by the sun to 85 degrees. We placed an iron jug filled with water in the cold sand, and drank recklessly; for soon we were going to be able to fill the tanks again to the brim.

The further down we went, the moister the sand grew. We could now squeeze it into balls that did not crumble. As each digger wearied, he was replaced by a fresh one. The upper part of our bodies were bare, and we perspired freely. Now and then we lay down on the cool, moist sand to cool our fevered blood. The camels, Yoldash, and the sheep waited impatiently around the well. They knew that their thirst would eventually be quenched.

It was pitch-dark; so we placed a couple of candle-ends in small niches in the sides of the well.

How far down might the water be? If we had to dig all night, and all the next day, we were determined to find water! We worked with the determination of despair. I sat watching Kasim, who, illuminated from above by the candles, looked fantastic at the bottom of the well, ten feet down. I was waiting to see the reflection thrown back by the first drops of water!

Suddenly Kasim stopped abruptly in his work. The spade slid from his hands. With a half-choked cry he collapsed at the bottom of the well. Fearing that he had had a stroke, I shouted down to him: "What has happened?"

"The sand is dry," he answered; and it sounded like a voice from the grave, like the death-knell of our unfortunate caravan.

The sand was as dry as tinder. We had exhausted our strength in vain. We had used up nearly our whole meager supply of water, and had worked up a violent perspiration, all for nothing. Without a word, the men threw themselves on the ground, hoping to forget the sorrows of the day in sleep. I talked with Islam for a while, and did not conceal the danger of our situation. Yet Khotan-daria could not be far away. We had to see the undertaking through. We had water for one day more. It would have to do for three days. That meant two cups a day per man, one bowl for the dog, and one for the sheep. The camels had not been watered for three days. They would not get another drop. Our entire supply was less than a tenth of what a camel would need to drink its fill.

Steel-blue, rain-filled clouds appeared in the west before sunset. Our hopes revived again. The clouds expanded and approached. We kept the last two empty tanks, placed all the bowls and jugs on the sand, and spread the tent-covering on the surface of the dune. It grew dark! We took the tent covering by the corners, and stood ready to collect Life, the rescue which was to come from the sky. But when close upon us, the clouds thinned out gradually. One man after another let go the cloth and walked away sadly. The clouds vanished without trace, as though the aqueous vapor had been annihilated in the warm desert air. Not a drop reached us.

In the evening, I listened to the conversation of the men. "The camels will collapse first, one by one; then it will be our turn," said one of them. Yolchi, the guide, thought that we had come in for *telesmat*, or witchcraft.

"We only imagine that we are walking straight ahead; but in reality we are walking in a circle all the time. We exhaust ourselves uselessly. We might just as well lie down to die anywhere."

"Haven't you noticed the regular course of the sun?" I asked. "Do you think that one walks in a circle, when one has the sun at one's right every day at noon?"

"We only think so; it is *telesmat*," he insisted. "Or the sun itself has gone mad."

Thirsty, after the two miserable cups of water

which was our dole for the whole day, we again went to rest. On May first, Islam suggested that we continue, and look for a spot of hard clay ground, where we might dig for water. All the camels were lying down. I climbed on the white one. Like the others, he refused to get up. Our plight was desperate. Here we were to die. Mohammad Shah lay babbling, toying with the sand, and raving about water. I realized that we had reached the last act of our desert-drama. But I was not yet ready to give in altogether.

It was only half-past nine in the morning and we had hardly traversed three miles. I was absolutely done up, and not able to move a finger, I thought I was dying. I imagined myself already lying in a mortuary chapel. The church-bells had stopped tolling for the funeral. My whole life flew past me like a dream. There were not many hours left me on the threshold of eternity. But most of all, I was tormented by the thought of the anxiety and uncertainty which I would cause my parents and brothers and sisters. They would wait and wait at home. One year would pass after another. But no news would come, and finally they would cease hoping.

We walked on through the night and sand. After two hours of it, we were so exhausted, from fatigue and from lack of sleep, that we flung ourselves headlong on the sand, and dozed off. After another halt, we walked on for five hours more, that is, from four to nine in the morning. This was on the second of May. Then one hour's rest again, and one and a half hour's slow march. The sun was blazing. All became black before our eyes, as we sank down on the sand. Kasim dug out, from a northerly slope, sand which was still cold from the night. I stripped and laid myself down in it, while Kasim shoveled sand over me up to my neck. He did the same for himself. Our heads were quite close to each other, and we shaded ourselves from the sun by hanging our clothes on the spade, which we stuck in the ground.

All day long we lay like this, speaking not a word, and not getting a wink of sleep. The turquoise-blue sky arched over us, and the yellow sea of the desert extended around us, stretching to the horizon.

The sand-bath, although cooling and pleasant during the heat of the day, was also weakening. Our strength was ebbing. We could not cover as much ground as the night before. Thirst did not torment us, as it had done during the first days; for the mouth cavity had become as dry as the outside skin, and the craving was dulled. An increasing feebleness set in, instead. The functioning of all the glands was reduced. Our blood got thicker, and flowed through the capillaries with increasing sluggishness. Sooner or later this process of drying-up would reach its climax in death.

When the new day dawned, on the fifth of May, we rose heavily, and with difficulty. Kasim looked terrible. His tongue was white and swollen, his lips blue, his cheeks hollow, and his eyes had a dying, glassy luster. He was tortured by a kind of death-hiccup, which shook his whole frame. When the body is so completely dried up that the joints almost creak, every movement is an effort.

It grew lighter. The sun rose. From the top of a dune, where nothing obstructed the view towards the east, we noticed that the horizon, which for two weeks had revealed a row of yellow saw-teeth, now disclosed an absolutely even, dark-green line. We stopped short, as though petrified, and exclaimed simultaneously: "The forest!" And I added: "The Khotan-daria! Water!"

Again we collected what little strength we had left, and struggled along eastwards. The dark-green line grew, the dunes diminished, stopped altogether, and were replaced by level, soft ground. We were but a few hundred yards from the forest. At half past five we reached the first poplars, and wearied, sank down in their shade. We enjoyed the fragrance of the forest. We saw flowers growing between the trees, and heard the birds sing and the flies and gadflies hum.

I urged Kasim to accompany me to the river to drink. He signaled with his hand that he could not rise; and he whispered that he would soon die under the poplars.

Alone I pulled myself along through the forest. Thickets of thorny bushes, and dry, fallen branches, obstructed my way. I tore my thin clothes and scratched my hands; but gradually I worked my way through. I rested frequently, crawled part of the way on all-fours,

and noticed with anxiety how the darkness grew denser in the woods. Finally the new night came – the last one. I could not have survived another day.

I knew that the course of the river was almost due north. The shortest distance to the right-hand shore would therefore be straight eastward. Although the moon was up, and I watched the compass, I was all the time, and unconsciously, being drawn toward the south-east. There was no use fighting this force. I walked as though led by an invisible hand. Finally I resisted no more, but walked towards the southeast, where the moon was. I frequently sank down and rested. I was then overcome by a terrible desire for sleep. My head sank to the ground, and I had to use all my will-power not to go to sleep. Had I gone to sleep, exhausted as I was, I am sure I should never have waked again.

Like the beds of all desert-rivers in Central Asia, that of Khotandaria is very wide, flat and shallow. A light haze floated over the desolate landscape. I had gone about one mile, when the outlines of the forest on the eastern shore appeared below the moon. Dense thickets of bushes and reeds grew on the terraced shore. A fallen poplar stretched its dark trunk down towards the river-bed. It looked like the body of a crocodile. The bed still remained as dry as before. It was not far to the shore where I must lie down and die. My life hung on a hair.

Suddenly I started, and stopped short. A water-bird, a wild duck or goose, rose on whirring wings, and I heard a splash. The next moment, I stood on the edge of a pool, seventy feet long and fifteen feet wide! The water looked as black as ink in the moonlight. The overturned poplar-trunk was reflected in its depths.

In the silent night I thanked God for my miraculous deliverance. Had I continued eastwards I should have been lost. In fact, if I had touched shore only a hundred yards north or south of the pool, I would have believed the entire river-bed to be dry. I knew that the freshets from melting snow-fields and glaciers in northern Tibet flowed down through the Khotan Dariya bed only in the beginning of June, to dry up in the late summer and autumn, leaving the bed dry during the winter and spring. I had also heard that in certain places, separated some times by a day's journey or more, the river forms eddies, which scoop the bed into greater depths, and that the water may remain the year round in these hollows near the terraced shore. And now I had come upon one of these extremely rare bodies of water!

I sat down calmly on the bank, and felt my pulse. It was so weak that it was hardly noticeable – only forty-nine beats. Then I drank, and drank again. I drank without restraint. The water was cold, clear as crystal, and as sweet as the best spring-water. And then I drank again. My dried-up body absorbed the moisture like a sponge. All my joints softened, all my movements became easier. My skin, hard as parchment before, now became softened. My forehead grew moist. The pulse increased in strength; and after a few minutes it was fifty-six. The blood flowed more freely in my veins. I had a feeling of well-being and comfort. I drank again, and sat caressing the water in this blessed pool. Later on, I christened this pool *Khoda-verdi-kol*, or "The Pool of God's Gift."

The reeds grew thick on the shore, and the bushes formed tangled thickets. The silver crescent of the moon hung in the crown of a poplar. There was a rustle in the thicket. Brittle, dry reeds were displaced as by a boy propelling itself. Was it a tiger, stealing to the pool to drink? With the smile of a conqueror I waited to see his eyes shine in the dark. "Come on, you!" I thought. "Just try to take my life, which but five minutes ago was granted me a second time!" But the swishing sound among the reeds died away; and whether it was a tiger or some other forest inhabitant that had come to the pool to quench his thirst, he evidently thought it best to retire, on discovering the intrusion made by this long man, gone astray.

4. CHALLENGING NATURE

(Aurel Stein, *Innermost Asia*, vol. 1, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1981, pp. 82- 87. Permission pending)

Despite the harsh experiences illustrated by earlier explorations led by Dr. Hedin in 1895, Sir Aurel Stein decided to make another attempt to conquer the Taklamakan desert, a description of which follows:

In order to guard against the dangers to which this final disaster had apparently been largely due, I had taken care to choose a season cooler and hence far less trying to men and camels; to assure the provision of an adequate supply of water and to lighten the loads of each animal as much as possible.

In view of Dr. Hedin's experience farther north and of what Kasim Akhun reported about the sand formations around the Khotan Mazar-tagh, there was little hope of gaining easier ground until we reached that hill range itself. And worst of all, there was no assurance that, however carefully our bearings might be taken, the route followed would actually allow us to sight that conjectured north-western extension of the low hill range which I was anxious to trace in the Taklamakan; for previous experience had taught me only too well the impossibility of steering an exact course amidst high sands by the compass.

So there followed for me a night of anxious consideration. I realized that the effort to force our way across the forbidding obstacles created by dunes could not be persisted without facing heavy losses in animals and equipment. The risk of serious delay as a result of such losses weighed even more heavily in the scale, while the chance of securing in return fresh topographical observations of interest was far too problematic to balance it. Reluctant however to abandon a cherished plan, I left my decision till next morning. Ascending then the highest dune near our camp and carefully scanning the horizon eastwards with my glasses I saw nothing but the same expanse of formidable sand ridges, which resembled the huge waves of an angry ocean suddenly arrested in movement. Closely packed dunes stretched over and between them without anywhere a patch of eroded ground or easier sand. The deceptive appearance of hills that refraction gave for a brief time to distant sand ridges vanished as the sun rose well above the horizon.

There was a strange allurement in this vista, which suggested Nature suddenly caught in a death torpor, and I found it hard to resist it. We men might have safely struggled through in the end, but only at the cost of sacrificing some or most of our brave camels, the mainstay of our transport for the difficult explorations of the winter, and of hampering our work by loss of time and equipment. To make our way due east to the Khotan river might have meant a reduction of difficulties and distance, as we should then have kept parallel to the Dawans, at least for a portion of the way. But such a route would have led over ground already seen by Dr. Hedin and could offer no appreciable advantage. So there remained no choice but to turn and reach the Khotan Mazar-tagh by way of the Yarkand river. It was a hard decision to take, and the knowledge that the little band of hardy men with me would have willingly shared what risks and adventures lay ahead did not help to lighten it. But experience proved the wisdom of having bowed to necessity in time; for the next day but one there sprang up a violent sandstorm, the first of the autumn, most trying by its bitter cold even where fuel was abundant. Its icy blasts continued for days, and if met with amidst the high sands would greatly have impeded our movement and caused serious suffering; a single camel load of fuel was all we had been able to take along.

5. MOUNTAIN OF BLINDING DARKNESS

(Aurel Stein, *Sand-buried Ruins of Khotan*, London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903, p. 211. Permission pending.)

After crossing the desert of Chinese Turkestan during an early expedition in his search of the sand-buried ruins of Khotan, Aurel Stein continued through a rocky and steep terrain of the Himalayas. What follows is a description of this exploration:

My men had been told that a difficult and long march lay before us. So on the morning of the 23rd they were quicker than usual about the start. When I got outside my tent a little after six o'clock I saw to my delight a gloriously clear sky. The cold was also a surprise. Even at 7 a.m. the thermometer showed 23 Degrees Fahrenheit; the little watercourse near my tent was hard frozen. As soon as we had climbed the edge of the plateau some 500 feet above Pisha, a grand view opened out upon the whole ice-crowned range. Kuen-luen Peak No. 5 now lay in full view to the south-east,

and its glacier-crowned head appeared quite close in the absolutely clear atmosphere. For about eight miles we rode over a broad, barren plateau that rose with an easy gradient towards the south. Then I turned off the track and climbed a high ridge eastwards that from a distance promised a good surveying station.

Its height, 13,950 feet above the sea, commanded a panorama more impressive than any I had enjoyed since I stood on the slope of Muztagh-Ata. To the east there rose the great Kuen-Lueu Peak with its fantastic ridges separated by glittering glaciers and its foot rising from a belt of strangely eroded bare ridges. By its side the gorge of the main branch of the Yurung-Kash could clearly be made out as it cuts through the series of stupendous spurs that trend northwards from the main snowy range of the Kuen-Luen. From the latter the great peak was thus entirely separated – an interesting observation fully in accord with the geography of the Karakorum and Hindukush. There it has long ago been remarked that the points of greatest elevation are not to be found on the actual watershed, but on secondary spurs detached from it.

The deep-cut valley and serrated ridges descending from the main range presented a most striking contrast to the flat, worn-down features of the plateaus behind us. To the west the course of the Yurung-Kash was lost in a jumble of rocky walls that gradually sank away towards the plain. In the north there showed itself as one unbroken mass the gaunt conglomerate range which we had crossed on the way to Buya, culminating in a broad, snow-covered peak, the Tikelik-Tagh, some distance to the east of the Ulugh-Dawan. Nature could not have created a better survey-station than the ridge on which I stood. With the enjoyment of the grand panoramic view there mingled the satisfaction of seeing so large and interesting a tract hitherto unsurveyed suddenly spread out before me as if it were a map. While Ram Singh worked away at his plane-table I was busily engaged in taking a complete circle of views with the photo-theodolite. Notwithstanding the perfectly blue sky it was bitterly cold on that height, as my fingers soon felt in handling the delicate instrument.

It was nearly three o'clock before our work was done, and I was able to hurry down hill. I had noticed how distant the valley of Karanghu-Tagh was where we were to finish the day's march, and the guides from Pisha had, with unwanted animation, dwelt on the badness of the track leading to it. After a comparatively easy descent of two miles we reached the line where the high plateau so far followed falls off towards the Yurung-Kash Valley in a series of precipitous ravines. The one which the track follows at first looked exactly like the gorges I had seen in Astor leading down to the Indus. High rock-faces lined its sides, and the withering effects of atmospheric influences seemed here less marked than on the ranges passed northward. At an elevation of about 11,000 feet the path crossed a rocky neck eastwards, and then led down precipitously to the river flowing more than 3,000 feet below.

It was just getting dark as we began this trying part of the descent, but even if it had been broad daylight it would have been impossible to ride. The angle at which the path zigzags down the precipitous cliff was so steep that the ponies could be dragged forward only with difficulty. The loose stones that cover the path increased the trouble, while the deep dust in which they are embedded at times almost smothered us. Never had I marched in such a dust-cloud as that which enveloped us until, after an hour and a half's scramble, the bottom of the valley was reached at the point where the Yurung-Kash is joined by the Kash stream flowing out from the side valley of Karanghu-Tagh.

It was perfectly dark when we crossed to the left bank of the Yurung-Kash by a rickety bridge consisting of three badly joined beams laid over a chasm some 70 feet wide. The foam of the river tossing deep down in the narrow bed of rocks could be made out even in the darkness. In daylight, and in a less tired condition, the crossing might have affected one's nerves more. As it was, I felt heartily glad when I saw the ponies safely on the other side. Karanghu-Tagh means "Mountain of blinding darkness," and at the time of our approach the appropriateness of the name could not have been doubted. For about an hour we and our tired beasts groped our way between the boulder-strewn bank of the Kash stream and the foot of steep hill-slopes before we reached at last the village that bears that cheerful name. The baggage had arrived safely, but also with great delay, and thus it was late in the night before I could retire to rest.

SETTLEMENTS AND DWELLINGS

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If one were to look at the great cities of the world today – New York, London, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Beijing – it would be impossible to believe they did not exist at one point in time or were just tiny hamlets. However, throughout time cities have grown and then disappeared. At one point, Central Asia had some of the largest and most sophisticated cities which sustained large populations, developed trade networks and provided a cosmopolitan lifestyle for the inhabitants. Today many of these cities have disappeared or have antiquities in terrible repair. These readings attempt to give us the "flavor" of the great cities of Inner/Central Asia and the vibrancy of the region.

1. WHY "SILK" ROAD AND WHY SILK "ROAD"?

(Peter Hopkirk, *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road*, Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984. pp. 125-133. Reprinted by Permission. Copyright © 1980 by Peter Hopkirk.)

Of all the precious goods carried along the Silk Road, silk was probably the most remarkable for the people of the West. In this way, one of the oldest of the world's great highways, the Silk Road, acquired this evocative name. For not only did this great caravan route across China, Central Asia and the Middle East consist of a number of roads, but it also carried a good deal more than just silk.

It is often thought that the Romans had first encountered silk in one of their campaigns against the Parthians in 53 B.C., and realized that it could not have been produced by this relatively unsophisticated people. They later learned from Parthian prisoners that it came from a mysterious tribe in the east, who they came to refer to as the silk people, "Seres." The Romans firmly believed that silk grew on trees. As Pliny wrote: "The Seres are famous for the wool of their forests. They remove the down from leaves with the help of water..." Virgil too described how the "Chinese comb off leaves their delicate down." The Chinese, moreover, had no intention of dispelling such myths. Although willing enough to sell their silk, whose secret they themselves had discovered a thousand years before, they were determined to maintain their monopoly of the trade. This they managed to do for a further six centuries, until the first silkworm eggs were smuggled out of China to Byzantium, supposedly by Nestorian monks who, it is said, concealed them in a hollowed-out wooden staff.

The Silk Road (sometimes known as the Silk Route) started from Ch'ang-an, present-day Xian, and struck north-westwards, passing through the Gansu corridor to the oasis of Tun-huang in the Gobi desert, a frontier town destined to play a dramatic role in this story. Leaving Tun-huang, and passing through the famous Jade Gate, or Yu-men-kuan, it then divided, giving caravans a choice of two routes around the perimeter of the Taklamakan desert.

The northern of these two trails struck out across the desert towards Hami, nearly three weeks distant. Then hugging the foothills of the Tien Shan, or "celestial mountains," it followed the line of oases dotted along the northern rim of the Taklamakan, passing through Turfan, Karashahr, Kucha, Aksu, Tumchuq and Kashgar. The southern route threaded its way between the northern ramparts of Tibet and the desert edge, again following the oases, including Miran, Endere, Niya, Keriya, Khotan and Yarkand. From there it turned northwards around the far end of the Taklamakan to rejoin the northern route at Kashgar. From Kashgar the Silk Road continued westwards, starting with a long and perilous ascent of the High Pamir, the "Roof of the World." Here it passed out of Chinese territory into what is now Soviet Central Asia, continuing via Khokand, Samarkand, Bokhara, Merv, through Persia and Iraq, to the Mediterranean coast. From there ships carried the merchandise to Rome and Alexandria.

Another branch left the southern route at the far end of the Taklamakan and veering toward Balkh, today in northern Afghanistan, rejoining the west-bound Silk Road at Merv. An important feeder road, this time to India, also left the southern route at Yarkand, climbed the hazardous Karakoram passes, the "Gates of India," to the towns of Leh and Srinagar, before beginning the easy ride down to the markets of the Bombay coast. There was yet another branch at the eastern end of the trail known to the Chinese as "the road of the centre." After leaving the Jade Gate, this skirted the northern shore of Hedin's "wandering lake" at Lop Nor and

passed through the important oasis town of Lou-lan before rejoining the main northern route.

The Silk Road was entirely dependent for both its existence and survival upon the line of strategically situated oases, each no more than a few days' march from the next, around the edge of the Taklamakan. The oases depended for their survival upon the glacier-fed rivers flowing down from the vast mountain ranges around three sides of the great desert. As the Silk Road traffic increased, these oases began to rank as important trading centers in their own right. Over the centuries the larger and more prosperous oases gained control over the surrounding regions and developed into independent feudal principalities or petty kingdoms.

2. CARAVANS – MOVING CITIES OF THE DESERT

(From *Bukhara: The Medieval Achievement* by Richard Nelson Frye. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965, p. 73, © 1965 by the University of Oklahoma Press. Reprinted by Permission.)

The movement of goods along the trade routes was complicated. It also led to the development of "mediums of exchange" – coinage, letters of credit, and even checks. By the end of the medieval period, elaborate systems had been devised to assist the merchants in making a profit for all their efforts.

Silver always has been the currency of the steppes, and merchants from Samanid domains (the Samanid Empire was formed by some of the earliest inhabitants of Central Asia and resided largely in the southern Russian steppes) found that the nomads of Central Asia and south Russia would willingly accept their coins. The large volume of trade with eastern Europe is well documented by the quantities of Samanid silver coins found in Russia, Poland and Scandanavia. The tenth century was a period of Viking expansion, so far-flung contacts were not unusual. Hoards of Samanid coins, as well as fewer "Bukhar Khudah" coins, have been found, many of them broken in currency as well as for pure exchange in eastern Europe. But the coins had to be of good silver. In China and in eastern Turkistan, on the contrary, no hoards of Samanid coins have been found, indicating, as the sources also report, that the Chinese did not accept silver coins but bartered goods with the caravans from the west. The caravans were composed not only of merchants, servants, and guards, but also of craftsmen and missionaries. They were, indeed miniature towns on the move. And they brought their customs and culture with them. Just as the Sogdian merchants brought Iranian culture to the Far East, so did the Khwarazmians to eastern Europe, and in both instances the routes were dotted with *caravansarais* (large enclosures which housed the caravans of people, animals and goods and provided protection, shelter and services for the caravans).

About every eighteen to twenty miles, the normal daily distance crossed by a caravan, buildings were erected to facilitate the voyage of merchants. Some *caravansarais* have survived down to the present and are solid structures of stone, or of logs in eastern Russia. Others developed into towns or villages, but they generally followed a line of water holes or sites of easy defense. The caravans were accompanied by guards, since the routes were frequently infested with bandits and nomadic tribes.

The organization of caravans, *sarais*, guards, and the rest, was a complicated affair, so joint companies were formed and trade became highly organized. Whatever the origin of the word "check," which has been associated by some scholars with the Chinese who brought them to the Near East as paper money in the Mongol period, an institution similar to letters of credit and notes existed in the tenth century. It was not safe to carry large sums of money on one's person. In order to transfer funds from one city to another, one had recourse to a banker (*sarraf*) in one city who issued a check on his colleague in the other city.

3. THE UNKNOWN KINGDOMS

(Jeannette Mirsky's anthology, *The Great Chinese Travelers*, Pantheon Press, 1964. Permission pending)

A century before the birth of Christ an adventurous young Chinese traveler called Chang Ch'ien set out across China on a secret mission to the

then remote and mysterious regions of the west. As the ambassador from the Han emperor of China to the King of Bactria, he brought back knowledge of great importance about the rich and previously unknown kingdoms of Ferghana, Samarkand, Bokhara (all now in Soviet Central Asia) and Balkh (now in Afghanistan). Also for the first time the Chinese learned of the existence of Persia and of another distant land called Li-jien. This, present-day scholars believe, was almost certainly Rome. Chang's tale was written in the Shih Chi, Memoirs of an Historian, *and is a great depiction of his travels. These are some of Chang's impressions of the lands he visited:*

- **Ferghana:** is to the southwest of the Huns and due west of China. The people are settled and engage in agriculture; in their fields they raise rice and wheat. They have wine made of grapes and many good horses. The horses "sweat blood" and come from stock of the Heavenly Horse. They have walled cities and houses... their population is an aggregate of several hundreds of thousands. Their armies consist of bows and halberds, and they can shoot arrows while on horseback. North of this country is Sogdiana; in the west are the Indo-Scythians; in the southwest is Bactria; in the northeast are the Wu-sun; and in the east Khotan.

- **Sogdiana:** is to the northeast of Ferghana. It is also a country of nomads. The have 80 or 90 thousand archers. The country is small. In the south it is under political influence of Yueh-chih; in the east, under that of the Huns. The Chinese wished to declare war on the Huns and establish contact with the Yueh-chih.

- **Aorsi:** about 2000 *li* northeast of Sogdiana. It is a nomad state similar in customs to those of Sogdiana.

- **Indo-Scythians:** These people live to the north of the Oxus river, south of them is the country of Bactria, in the north is the country of Sogdiana. They are a nomadic people with flocks. Their customs are the same as the Huns and they have from 100,000 to 200,000 archers.

- **Parthia:** Although he did not personally visit the country, he knew it existed several thousand *li* west of the Indo-Scythians. The people were agriculturalists with fields of wheat and rice and arbors of grapes. It is a very large country and close to Oxus. They have silver coins with the king's face on it and keep records by painting rows of characters on stiff leather.

- **Syria and Babylonia:** These lands are close to the Western Sea (Red Sea). Rice is grown here and they have a large population to feed.

- **Bactria:** In this country the people have fixed abodes and live in walled cities. There are many towns with petty chiefs and the population of the country may be over 1,000,000. Chang Ch'ien reported the following: "When I was in Bactria, I saw a stick of bamboo from Szechuan and some cloth from India." Although India is several thousand *li* to the southeast of Bactria, the country cannot be far from Szechuan.

4. THE SLEEPING CITY OF LOU-LAN

(Sven Hedin, *My Life As An Explorer*, Garden City: Garden City Publishing Co., 1925, pp. 325-330. Permission pending)

Sven Hedin discovered several ruined cities on the southern side of the Taklamakan desert. His biggest find was the city of Lou-Lan, from which he removed a large number of ancient manuscripts. Lou-Lan was once the terminal oasis of the Konche river, that fed the shallow lake of Lop Nor. The oases ceased to be occupied as the river gradually receded. This is what Sven Hedin writes about his discovery:

The collection of smaller objects that we dug out in Lou-lan contained many coins which bridge a gap in the monetary system of the Wei and Tsin dynasties. One bears the date of the year 7, another 14 A.D. There were also hunting-arrows, battle-arrows, and fire-arrows, "to which fire could be tied"; sinking-weights of lead and stone, for fishing-nets; cowry shells; ear-pendants; necklaces; an antique gem, with an image of Hermes; glass from Syria or Rome; spoons, tweezers, and

hairpins of bronze; an iron chain; spoons and other wooden articles; pieces of silk, in various shades, for clothes; a bed-cover; a woolen rug; linen; shoes; etc.

The written documents, and the objects themselves, show that the Lou-lan government had its warehouses, that there were an inn, a hospital, a post-office building, a temple, private dwellings, and huts where the poor people lived, huts which have as surely disappeared as will the modern reed huts of the Lop country. References to imports, particularly that of Chinese silk for local consumption, are evidence that the population was rather great. In the better houses, hard earthen floors were covered with reed mats, on which lay the precious woven rugs. Large clay jugs, with water for the household, stood in the yards. Bowls and dishes decorated with Indo-Persian lion-heads, were in use: also, glass from Syria, the nearest country in those days which understood the manufacture of glass.

The educated classes possessed famous works of literature. A barbarian-Chinese-international mixed culture, of present-day character, flourished in Lou-lan; for the town was a frontier citadel, a gateway or barricade to ancient roads in the heart of Asia. Travelers from far and near came there. The peasants took their products there on burden-animals and in carts, the government purchasing and paying for the goods. There the soldiers received their pay in grain, and, in its market-places, bought felt for their winter clothes. At times the city was crowded and all inns were filled.

The documents refer to tax-evaders and their punishment; to post-couriers; to Ma, the chief inspector, who proceeds on his round of duty with outriders and escort; to hostile tribes of nomads; to silk-caravans, flying the government banner at their head, and with sturdy Tibetan donkeys in their train; to cavalry, lancers, archers, war-chariots, apparatus for siege and defense; to military baggage-trains; to all sorts of weapons; to the military high command; to a general; to a general staff-officer; to the inspector of war-chariots; to the inspector of military supplies; to the staff-surgeon and other officials. Because of Lou-lan's significance and location, it was heavily garrisoned. There are references to the administration of law, criminal statutes, taxation, domiciliary rights, recruiting, passports, the barter of grain for silk (though there was a regular system of coinage), and to many other matters.

It is also plain from the Lou-lan texts that unsettled conditions prevailed in and about the little town. They tell of serious revolts, of war-expeditions and battles. The structure of the Chinese dominion was tottering to its fall. The cord around Lou-lan tightened more and more. The "hooting of the owls," as the war-clamor is called in one of the letters, came nearer and nearer. Weakened by internal party strife, China finally succumbed to the barbarians, fell to pieces, and was ruled by its conquerors for centuries.

Lou-lan fell in the beginning of the fourth century, a symbol of the fall of China itself. But the authorities never flinched in their duty to the state, in spite of the ominous cloud that hung over the town. Everyone did his part. When the drums outside the walls sounded the call to arms, and the fires burned on the towers, these officials remained steadfast in their places, finishing their reports as if nothing unusual had happened. They sent New Year's greetings and letters of condolence to their friends, not allowing themselves to be disturbed by the impending danger. We read with admiration and emotion of the strength of character and the courage with which these Chinese did their duty, and we understand how it is that this remarkable people could keep the control of Asia in its hands.

To this day I like to dream of its past greatness and its glamour in about 267, the same year in which the Goths attacked Athens and were driven back, and when the Roman emperor Valerian was a prisoner of the Persian king Sapor. I recall the marvel that not a single one of our ancient Swedish *rune* stones is older than the fragile wooden staffs and paper fragments that I found in Lou-lan. When Marco Polo made his famous journey through Asia, in 1274, the sleeping city had already lain a thousand years unknown and forgotten in its desert. And after the great Venetian's journey, it was to slumber six hundred and fifty years more before the ghosts of its past were roused to life, and their ancient documents and letters made to shed new light on bygone days and mysterious human fates.

5. FURTHER FINDINGS AT LOU-LAN

(Aurel Stein, *Innermost Asia*, vol. 1, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1981, p. 227. Permission pending)

Later, in the early 20th century, Aurel Stein, followed Hedin's traces and continued the discovery of mysterious Lou-Lan, by doing more extensive excavations, opening up graves and making more valuable finds. Stein knew that Hedin, one of his heroes, had only been able to do preliminary work at the site. The following is an excerpt from his writing:

My hopes were abundantly fulfilled as soon as the arrival of my diggers made it possible to start the clearing of the graves. The importance of the antiquarian treasure that I had come upon became apparent almost at once; but what impressed me even more at the time was the quite bewildering confusion in which it presented itself. Instead of regular burials with coffins and human bodies more or less recognizable, there emerged from the grave-pits a mass of detached human bones mixed up in utter disorder with fragments of boards once evidently belonging to coffins; with objects of personal use, such as decorated bronze mirrors, wooden combs, etc. deposited with the dead; wooden eating-trays, jugs, etc. used for sepulchral offerings; wooden models of arms, and, above all, with rags of every sort comprising a wonderful variety of fabrics. That all these materials were of Chinese origin or had been in Chinese use there could be no doubt, and finds of Chinese records on paper and wood confirmed it.

Many of them [the fabrics] were excellently preserved, notwithstanding their dirt and sand-encrusted condition. At the same time, not a single intact skeleton was found, and that all such human bones as were not still protected by swathing plainly showed marks of weathering and corrosion. This was obviously the result of a prolonged exposure which these human remains must have undergone before their final deposit in the pits that I was clearing.

The character of the mixed remains in the pits left no doubt about their having been gathered from earlier graves, threatened with destruction or already exposed. It appears equally certain that this had been done in obedience to a pious custom that is still widely prevalent among the Chinese. The documentary evidence recovered at the station proves that, notwithstanding the much-reduced importance of its route, Lou-lan still remained a small Chinese garrison in the third century, and that traffic between it and Tun-huang, no doubt in much-diminishing volume, was maintained down to the second quarter of the fourth century.

6. EXPLORING BOKHARA

(Sven Hedin, *My Life As An Explorer*, Garden City: Garden City Publishing Co., 1925, p.91. Permission pending)

The city of Bokhara in Transoxania (present day Uzbekistan), in addition to its tremendous economic and political importance on the Silk Road, was also famous in the region for being a meeting place for the greatest scholars and the literate circles. It also produced the finest textiles, established a Central Asian settled architectural tradition, and was famous for its irrigation system. Before going into a detailed description by Richard Frye of these achievements of the city, it is interesting to read the colorful memories of the Swedish explorer of late 19th century, Sven Hedin.

In the archways of the bazaars, where twilight always reigns, the bustling life of the Orient has a motley of its own. There one may admire the marvels of the Bokharan textile art; and in the antique-shops one runs across Greek and Sassanian silver and gold coins, and other rarities. Cotton, sheep-wool, lambskins and raw silk are exported in great quantities; and in the caravansary courts, connected with the bazaars, bales are piled mountain-high. There are nice restaurants and coffee houses; and from a distance one detects the odor of pastry made with onions and spices, and of coffee and tea.

I never tired of walking in the beautiful, narrow streets, between funny, two-story houses, with camel-caravans jostling their way among carts, horsemen, and pedestrians. I stopped frequently to sketch a mosque or a tempting street-scene. A noisy crowd would gather round me, and Said Murad, one of the servants of the

Russian legation, would keep bold urchins at a distance, by using his braided knout. Once I went for a stroll without him, and then the lads took their revenge, bombarding me systematically, which rendered drawing out of the question. They rushed at me from all sides, their missiles being rotten apples, lumps of earth, and all sorts of refuse.

In 1219 Ghengis Khan entered the door of the Great Mosque and ordered a general massacre. Not quite two hundred years later, Tamerlane restored the temple.

Not more than thirty-five years ago, criminals were still hurled from the top of a minaret, one hundred and sixty-five feet high, the judge having previously announced their crime from the same place, in a resounding voice. A couple of storks now had their nest there, and nobody was allowed on the top, because the nearby harem courts were visible therefrom.

Opposite the Great Mosque is Mir-Arab, a *madrasah* more famous than all others in Central Asia. It has circular towers, two cupolas of brilliant, green faience, and a house with four portals and one hundred and fourteen rooms for two hundred *mullahs*, or priests.

7. BUKHARA: THE MEDIEVAL ACHIEVEMENT

(From *Bukhara: The Medieval Achievement* by Richard Nelson Frye. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965, pp. 28-32, 59,79-81, 92, 157-158. Copyright © 1965 by the University of Oklahoma Press. Reprinted by Permission.)

Bukhara's splendors

Bukhara under its local lords had been an important city center, but under Islam it became a world city known to people as far away as Spain and China. The golden age of the city coincided with the rise of the New Persian language and literature and with the ecumenical development of Islam.

The growing commercial importance of Bukhara is revealed by the sources. Of special importance in the medieval Islamic world were textiles, and fragments of silks and other cloth from this period indicate the highly developed state of design and weaving. The oasis of Bukhara was famous for its cloth which was exported to India and Iraq since it was highly esteemed by aristocracy everywhere. The tax of Bukhara was collected by agents of the caliph in Baghdad not in money but in cloth and rugs.

The irrigation system of Bukhara should be mentioned, for here as elsewhere in the Orient water was the life blood of the city. For the oasis of Bukhara, the Zarafshan River provided water to such an extent that the river had no outlet, being completely utilized by the many canals which led water from it to the fields. In ancient times the river had drained into a lake or swamp, which later vanished because of irrigation. The famous system of underground irrigation tunnels, called *kariz* in Central Asia, was not necessary in the oasis of Bukhara since the water was near at hand and quickly utilized. According to Narshakhi every stream in the oasis except one was dug by man, hence all were in origin irrigation canals. Certainly the fertility of the soil well rewarded the attention and labor devoted to it. The fruit of Bukhara was famous and was exported to Merv, according to the geographer Yaquit.

Because of climatic conditions, the usual form of construction in Central Asia was stamped mud, or adobe, in the houses. Both sun- and kiln-dried bricks were employed on larger, public buildings, and plaster usually covered them on the inside. Varied and more sophisticated solutions for putting a circular dome on a square building had replaced the old pre-Islamic stepped vaults on the corners.

Woodwork seems to have been an art which was also distinctively Central Asian or even Samanid. Some beautiful carved wooden doors with floral designs from the Samanid period have survived and are in museums in the U.S.S.R. It is probable that purely Islamic structures, such as mosques and minarets, had profuse decorations, although none of the structures from the Samanid period mentioned in literary sources have survived.

Central Asian ceramic ware has been found in various sites in the Near East, evidence of the popularity

of Samanid pottery. The forms of pottery were also by no means uniform; pitchers, flat plates, bowls, animal or even human figures used as pitchers, a man on horseback, and others, indicate their interesting variety. Perhaps a certain puritan opposition to the use of gold and silver for household implements or tools spurred the artist in their embellishment of clay and bronze vessels. Whether this was the prime cause of the extraordinary development of pottery techniques such as enamel, lustre ware, gold leaf, and of elaborate designs, we do not know. But medieval Islamic pottery achieved very high standards of technical as well as artistic excellence.

Perhaps more than anything else which gave Bukhara fame was the sheer number of *savants* gathered there. The following passage by Abu Mansur al-Tha'alibi reveals the contemporary feeling:

> Bukhara was under Samanid rule, the focus of splendor, the shrine of empire, the meeting place of the most unique intellects of the age, the horizon of the literary stars of the world, and the fair of the greatest scholars of the period. Abu Ja'far al-Musavi related, "my father Abu'l-Hasan received an invitation to Bukhara in the days of the amir-I Sa'id [Nasr], and there were gathered together the most remarkable of its men of letters... ...And my father said to me, 'O my son, this is a notable and memorable day; make it an epoch as regards the assembling of the standards of talent and the most incomparable scholars of the age, and remember it, when I am gone, amongst the great occasions of the age and the notable moments of thy life. For I scarcely think that in the lapse of the years thou wilt see the like of these met together.' And so it was, for never again was my eye brightened with the sight of such a gathering."

City structure and the people

The striking feature of later Samanid rule was the development of the city into that structure which it was to maintain down to the twentieth century. Bukhara, as the capital, led the way. The large square to the west of the citadel of Bukhara, called the *Rigistan*, became the administrative center of the city and state, with the buildings of the various *divans*, palaces of the *amirs*, and other structures built around it. To the northwest of the *Rigistan* was the quarter of the residences of the aristocracy, where, according to Narshakhi, land was very expensive. The central part of Bukhara was occupied by the bazaars, divided into various quarters of specialties, coppersmiths, rug makers, shoe makers, etc. The bazaars were self-contained in that raw materials were brought into them, and artisans, who mostly lived behind their shops, made articles which were sold by merchants. The bazaars in the various cities were quite similar and linked together by merchants who maintained establishments in several centers.

Poets and other writers complained about the dirt, stench and crowded conditions in the city of Bukhara under the later Samanids. The growth in population had not been matched either by expansion of public responsibility or by government regulations, and hygienic conditions in the crowded, squalid living quarters were bad enough to rouse protests. Garbage was thrown into the narrow streets outside of high mud walls, and lanes and streets were sometimes almost impassable. The maze of dank, dark alleys reflected the concern of the citizen of Bukhara to retreat into his private dwelling, leaving the world outside to take care of itself. Just as in the growth of cities in Western Europe in the later Middle Ages, so in the domains of the Samanids, cities such as Bukhara, Samarqand, and Nishapur became centers of disease and pestilence. The aristocracy was able to escape the city and go to summer houses in gardens near Bukhara, but the masses were caught in their small rooms on narrow streets. Poems have been preserved which describe Bukhara in this period as a sewer, unfit for human life.

When economic conditions were bad, unemployment rose and city mobs were ever ready to revolt. We find echoes of such unrest in brief notices about the cities of the Samanid kingdom, but the writers of histories, it must be remembered, were usually members of the upper classes or writing for patrons among the aristocracy or for rulers, so popular movements are not well described. Another class of people who must have been a source of unrest and trouble were the *ghazis*, or warriors of the faith, who

came from all over the Islamic world to wage holy war against the infidel Turks of Central Asia. With the conversion of many Turkish tribes, in the tenth century, however, the reason for such *ghazis* to exist vanished. Many turned to banditry or swelled the unruly city mobs.

The population of Bukhara in this period is quite unknown, and any estimates are pure guesswork. From archaeological investigations plus comparisons with other cities, one might guess that the population was over one hundred thousand, but estimates reaching from one half to one million are surely exaggerated.

The literate, or rather more accurately the literary, class was small, even though it made a great impression in history, if not so much in the contemporary world of the tenth century. Life was too hard for the vast majority to be able to indulge in the higher pursuits of leisure. As we have noted, most literature was produced for the court, but the second half of the tenth century saw some significant productions, especially the Iranian epic.

The aristocracy of Bukhara for the most part resided in villas outside of the city. Here they held their minor courts surrounded by their guards or servants called *chakir*.

Land ownership

If we assemble information from all over the eastern Islamic world of the period from the fall of the Samanids to the Mongol conquest, at least six kinds of land ownership may be reported. First, we find *mulk* land, which was land owned privately by either large or small landowners who paid taxes on it to the state and who could do what they wished with the land. The owners could sell it, add to mulk land, leave it to their children, or leave it as a trust (*waqf*). Similar to privately owned lands were the special lands of the ruler, which he could also sell or give away like his private lands. State lands, on the other hand, could not be treated as private land and could be sold, given as *iqta'*, or in *waqf* only under certain but varying conditions. All the income from state lands went into the state treasury, and this category of land was probably the largest of the six in the period which we are discussing.

Endowed (i.e. *waqf*) land was usually given to maintain a mosque, a school, or a hospital, and only later did endowments for private persons or families proliferate. For example, it seems that in Bukhara down to 1920 there was a quarter of the city where the descendants of the Samanids lived, supported by income from *waqfs*. Documents for such endowments are as frequent as the parish records of medieval England. Endowed land had to conform to the terms of the *waqf* and could not be sold or given away.

Feudal land or *iqta* already has been mentioned. Legally, such lands could not be bought or sold by the *iqtadar* and were re-assigned at the death of the holder of an *iqta*, or such lands returned to the category of state (*divani*) lands. In practice, however, all sorts of innovations existed. Finally there was a small category of land called community land (*jama'at*) which belonged to the village, including surrounding orchards and pastures. Needless to say, the various modes of assessing and collected taxes also were manifold, and the general picture of post-Samanid landholding and taxation is one of great complexity compared with the earlier period.

8. MERV: OASIS OF TURQUOISE AND RAVENS

(Jane Waldron Grutz, Oasis of Turquoise and Ravens, in *Aramco World*, July/August 1998, pp.16-27. Reprinted by Permission.)

Sustained for more than 2500 years by the alluvial soil of the Murghab River delta, Merv, little remembered today, was already a strategic commercial center, known to traders from Constantinople to Xian. It fell with the rest of the Achaemenian empire to Alexander the Great in 330 B.C. Though its beautiful tiles are long since gone, the mausoleum's wind-weathered dome still dominates the desolate, ruined city of Merv. Thirteen centuries later, under the Seljuqs, a Turkic tribe whose rule ran from Central Asia westward to Anatolia and southwest into Arabia from roughly the 10th to the early 13th century, Merv became one of the largest and most cosmopolitan cities in the world. For 200 years the Silk Road trading city rivaled Damascus, Baghdad and even Cairo with its caravansaries, fine

residences, endlessly varied workshops – and, above all, its libraries. The Mongols attacked Merv three times between 1220 and 1223. They killed many inhabitants and ruined the city's extensive irrigation system which caused the city to be gradually abandoned. Merv revived in the 15th century when the Timurid ruler Shah Rukh began building a new city a few kilometers south of the ruined Seljuq capital. Although the Timurid rulers favored Bukhara, Samarkand and Herat, Merv remained significant because it was the only oasis between the Kopet Mountains of Iran and the Amu Darya, or Oxus River, and its value as a trading and agricultural center was largely a geographical, rather than political matter.

Several archaeological expeditions of late 19th and early 20th century worked on the site and discovered numerous material and informational artifacts. "Nowhere else in all Central Asia are ruins so abundant or so vast," wrote American geologist Raphael Pumpelly. Merv is indeed Central Asia's most extensive archeological site, with four major city sites.

Of all the findings particularly interest were some 40 shards – usually ceramic – on which drafts, notes and similar ephemera were commonly written. Most were in Middle Persian. But one, written on bone, was in the language of the Bactrian empire; another was in Soghdian, the language spoken in Samarkand and Bukhara, cities with the great trading nation of Soghdiana, just across the Amu Darya. This reinforced the assumption that Sassanian Merv and the cities of Soghdiana were close trading partners in the third through seventh centuries.

The most notable thing about the discovery was the architecture. "The Sassanians nearly always built courtyard houses, similar to what you see in the Middle East today," explains Simpson, "but in the houses [there] were freestanding rectangular houses. Every house was separated from every other by straight streets or alleys."

It was possible that these were types of houses mentioned by Du Huan, a Chinese merchant whose description of the city in 765 was based on the decade he spent there as a captive: "The wooden parts of the [building] are elaborately carved and the mud parts are painted with pictures," he wrote, describing what likely were houses with balconies overhanging the alleys, a feature that was common in other cities also.

Another interpretation, Simpson points out, might be that these houses of unexpected design belonged to some special group, perhaps a religious minority that lived apart from the rest of the city's population. Although there was no evidence for that in the excavations, historical sources are clear that Zoroastrians, Manicheans, Christians, Jews and Buddhists all lived in Merv at this time.

It is not certain whether the city's walls, some 2.5 meters (8 feet) thick and 15 meters (50 feet) tall, were built in expectation of the Mongols' attack, but during the Seljuq period, they stood as Merv's best – though ultimately inadequate – defense against invasion. They are also a uniquely well-preserved glimpse into the defensive systems of the Seljuq era.

Although just one tiny jiggle away from turning into dust, seeds from Merv, and other preserved organic materials, are beginning to tell archeobotanist Sheila Boardman stories about the agricultural economy of the once-thriving city. Apparently, cotton, which archeologists consider a cash crop because it supported the export-oriented textile industry, was under cultivation in Merv by the fifth century of our era, some 200 years before it is mentioned in any text. "Cotton was the way people in this region began to use agriculture not just for subsistence, but to produce salable products," Boardman says. "Merv was famous in the Islamic era for its textiles, and this shows that cotton production didn't start then, with the Arabs, but had been around for at least a couple of centuries before the Arab invasion. "What we still don't know," she adds, "is just how far the growth of cotton extended back into the Sassanian period."

She is also finding that, throughout the Sassanian period, Merv grew cereals, fruits and pulses such as beans. She has good evidence for barley and wheat, too, but so far none for rice. "Most of the cereals and pulses common in the West today originated in the Near East," explains Boardman, "and it's generally believed that apricot, pistachio, cucumber, apple, and a whole range of spices originated in central Asia as well."

9. MEMORIES OF SAMARKAND

(John Feeney, Memories of Samarkand, in *Aramco World*, 35:4, July-August, 1984, pp. 34-40. Permission pending)

For centuries, ancient trade routes – from Siberia to India, from China to Egypt – converged on the oasis of Samarkand. Greeks, Persians, Turks, Mongols, and Arabs all made their way there. Alexander knew it, Genghis Khan destroyed it, but it was Tamerlane's Samarkand that western men longed to see.

Tamerlane was born at Kash, "the green city," not far from Samarkand; a wound in the leg, received in a local rebellion, gave him the name of "Timur-the-lame." A born leader with a genius for strategy, he was only 21 when he set out "to conquer the world." But the time he was 37, his gigantic nomad empire stretched all the way from present day Moscow to the Great Wall of China.

As Lord of Asia, Tamerlane needed an imposing city to reflect his power, and so, after each victorious campaign in Persia and India, he collected the best artists and craftsmen he could find and brought them back to build his new city. What they created was neither Persian nor Indian in concept – nor was it modelled on the old Samarkand. Instead, they built a city possessing a new and dazzling Tartar conception.

There were no building materials at Samarkand and so – out of the dust of the surrounding desert, mixed with chopped straw, camel urine and clay from the Zeravshan River – the captured craftsmen had to make do with mud bricks, and with them created swelling domes and mud minarets. But then these inspired craftsmen began to face the brick in lovely glazed tile in every shade of blue imaginable – Tamerlane's favorite color – until, adorned from top to bottom with glittering blue tiles, Samarkand became the most fabled city on earth.

By the 18th century, Bukhara and Samarkand had become "forbidden cities" to all but Muslims; others who tried to get there either perished on the way or lost their heads on arrival. The two 19th-century superpowers, Czarist Russia and Great Britain, sent emissaries on secret missions seeking favors from the *amirs* of Bukhara and Samarkand – without success; their agents, travelling in disguise, were ruthlessly killed once they were discovered. The rulers were determined that no unbelievers should desecrate their holy places.

In 1866 Russia began taking over Central Asia, but even under Russian control "the golden road" was still something of an ordeal. If the days of travel in disguise and on camels were passing, the days of trains and bureaucracy were just beginning. By 1886 the journey had been cut to just 11 days; two years later, in 1888, a new railway line opened, and it was possible to cross Europe and take the new Trans-Caspian Express which went direct from St. Petersburg to Samarkand – no disguise, no camels – but you were advised to "take your own sheets, pillows, blankets, towels and bath."

By the 20th-century, the Moscow-Orenburg-Tashkent Express had cut the journey to just five days. But in the 1930s, at the height of Stalin's purges, foreigners who did manage to make it found that the journey meant "sleeping on hard boards and eating on station platforms."

Today, from Moscow, you can get there in just three hours and 50 minutes by plane – across the river Volga, writhing like a pre-historic serpent across the land, and over the forests, seas, and deserts once crossed by Alexander, the Mongol hordes and Genghis Khan – and after them – Timur-the-lame.

Intense sunlight and a desert dust so light the very heat waves rippling up off the sand raise it into the air, greet the modern traveller. Consequently, in spite of much modernity, all of Samarkand – old and new – seeks shade and coolness. The city abounds with avenues of trees and small tea platforms – raised from the ground under the trees, sometimes built out over streams – with carpets laid upon them, where men in flowing silk gowns sip their green Uzbek tea from china bowls.

Recent work has restored the Rigestan – the main public square – to its original splendor described by Lord Curzon as "the noblest square in the world." Surrounded on three sides by ancient colleges and mosques, with a tall minaret in each corner, the fourth side is open to the wind. On one side is Shirdar *madrasa*, or school, named because of its giant portal decorated with a tiger and a gazelle in the rays of the rising sun. On the second side of the square is Tilkari, or "gilded" *madrasa*, because of quantities of gold used in its tile decoration. On the third side is the *madrasa* of Ulugh Beg, Samarkand's famous astrologer and

grandson of Tamerlane. As might be expected the front of his *madrasa* is decorated with enormous star patterns.

...Tamerlane died on a cold winter's day in January 1405. His body, perfumed with rose water, musk and camphor, was placed in a coffin decorated with pearls and precious stones and dispatched in the dead of night for the return to his beloved Samarkand – a city built of mud, glazed with beauty and enshrined in legend.

10. BEYOND THE EASTERN FRONTIERS

(Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963, pp. 14-22. Copyright © 1963. Reprinted by permission.)

Although the eastern frontier of the Silk Road was officially Xian, the merchandise came from many other parts of the region, especially from the south, where port cities were situated.

Of all Chinese cities, the most prosperous and full of foreign merchants used to be the port city of Canton. The streets of the city were crowded with "... the argosies of the Brahmans, the Persians, and the Malays, their number beyond reckoning, all laden with aromatics, drugs, and rare and precious things, their cargoes heaped like hills." In exchange for their fragrant tropical woods and their almost legendary medicines, these dark outlanders sought bales of silk, boxes of chinaware, and slaves. With time, due to internal problem trade activity in Canton slowed down. The poet Tu Fu remarked in two poems the discontinuance of the flow of luxury wares northward from Canton at this time: "about the luminous pearls of the South Seas, it has long been quiet," and "recently the provision of a live rhino, or even of kingfisher feathers, has been rare."

Yang-chou became the jewel of China in the eighth century. The city owed its wealth and beauty to its location at the junction of the Yangtze River, which drained all central China, with the Grand Canal (called by the Chinese "River of Transport"), which carried the produce of the whole world to the great cities of the north. The citizens of the city traded tea, salt, precious stones, aromatics, and drugs brought up from Canton, and of costly damasks and tapestries brought down the Yangtze from Sichuan. Moreover, Yang-chou was a banking center and a gold market, where the financier was as important as the merchant. Yang-chou was a city of well-dressed people, a city where the best entertainment was always available, a city of parks and gardens, a very Venice, traversed by waterways, where the boats outnumbered the carriages. It was a city of moonlight and lanterns, a city of song and dance, a city of courtesans.

The growing population of China demanded for more cereals to be imported from the Yangtze region. These new demands put an unforeseen strain on the old canal system. A remedy was found in 734: granaries were built along the route from Yang-chou to Ch'ang-an (present day Xian) at critical points where grain might be properly stored. In this way steady flow northward was assured.

Ch'ang-an had two great markets, the Eastern and the Western, each with scores of bazaars. Proceeding through the Western Market, where most of the foreign merchants displayed their wares, one might see in succession the butchers' bazaar, the ironmongers' bazaar, the clothing bazaar, the bazaar of saddlers, the silk bazaar, and the bazaar of the druggists. After the middle of the eighth century, the tea merchants were particularly popular.

Of all the regions unconnected with the major cities by water, that in which aliens tended most to settle was the corridor of the caravans, leading westward into Turkestan. Here along the margin of the Gobi were Chinese towns, spaced at regular intervals, and equipped with caravanserais. Iranian fire worshipers and musicians were to be found in all of them, and all were of doubtful allegiance: one year the Chinese mandarins were in residence, quoting the sages and counseling virtue; the next year the Turks rode in, waving their bows; often Tibetan princes were their lords. Typical of these multilingual outposts was the old town of Liang-chou. Here the regal warlord Ko-shu Han held sway for a time, entertaining fortunate guests with lion pantomimes, saber dances, and the thoughtful attentions of red-lipped cupbearers. Most of the city's citizens were Chinese, but many were of Indian extraction, surnamed in the Chinese fashion, according to their ethnic origin. Here also were produced fine damasks, mats, and wild horse hides, not to mention an excellent headache remedy. This Liang-chou was a true melting pot, a kind of homely symbol of the exotic to the Chinese, as Hawaii is to the American of the twentieth century. The hybrid music of Liang-chou, at once foreign and familiar, since it was not entirely either, was in fashion in the early Middle Ages of the Far East.

TWO
How Did Movement Across the Region Influence Cultural Interaction?

MIGRATION: EXPLORATIONS, QUESTS AND CONQUESTS

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Just as Inner/Central Asia had wonderful states and cities, there were countless ethnic peoples who settled throughout the region. Many of the languages were not deciphered until recent times so we are just beginning to understand the people of the region and the wide diversity that existed.

1. WOMEN WARRIORS: A MATRIARCHAL SOCIETY?

(Jeannine Davis-Kimball, Warrior Women of the Eurasian Steppes, in *Archaeology*, January/February 1997, pp. 44-48. Reprinted with the permission of *Archaeology* Magazine, Vol. 50, No.1. Copyright © the Archeological Institute of America, 1997.)

The Kazakh/American Research Project, Inc., directed by Jeannine Davis-Kimball, in collaboration with the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Archaeology, lead by Leonid T. Yablonsky, has done a successful series of excavations at Pokrovka, Russia. The burials date to the Sauromatian Period (6th-4th centuries BC), and the Early Sarmatian Period (4th-2nd centuries BC), the Middle Sarmatian Period (1st century BC-1st century AD), and Late Sarmatian Period (2nd-3rd centuries AD). The excavations have provided very interesting insights into nomadic cultures of the time. Particularly rich was the cemetery that, along with traditional male burials, contained numerous burials of Sauro-Sarmatian female warriors and priestess. Jeannine Davis-Kimball has done extensive research based on this finding, which raises curiosity about the early state of the Central Asian nomadic civilization – was it a matriarchal society?

"Maidens fearless in battle," "a people great in war," "women the peers of men" – according to ancient authors these were the Amazons, a race of warrior women said variously to come from North Africa, the Caucasus, Asia Minor, or the steppes of southern Russia. The fifth-century B.C. writer Hellanicus described them as golden-shielded, silver-axed females, male-loving and male-infant-killing. Scholars long regarded such stories as myths used by the Greeks to rationalize a patriarchal society, where men fought battles in far-off lands while their wives stayed at home, bearing children. The matriarchal Amazon reversed gender roles. Goddess, queen, warrior, adulteress, priestess, witch, or Fury, she was the opposite of the Greek woman.

In the 1950's archaeologists excavating fourth-century BC burial mounds, or *kurgans*, of nomadic warriors on the steppes of southern Ukraine noticed that many graves of females contained swords, spears, daggers, arrowheads, and armor. During the past four years my Russian colleagues and I have excavated 50 kurgans near the town of Pokrovka, near the Kazakhstan border, 1,000 miles east of the Ukrainian sites. Here we also found women buried with bronze daggers and arrowheads. These finds suggest that Greek tales of Amazon warriors may have had some basis in fact.

In his travels north of the Black Sea ca. 450 BC, Herodotus (the famous Greek historian) reported hearing tales of warrior women who rode the steppes of southern Russia. He called them Amazons, but the neighboring Scythians fearfully called them Oiorpata, or "killers of men." Myths say the Greeks defeated the Amazons at the battle of Thermodon, on the southern coast of the Black Sea. Following the battle, according to Herodotus, the victors sailed for home with many captives aboard. The women rebelled and seized the ships, but during a storm they were cast upon cliffs in the land of the Scythians on the coast of the Sea of Azov. The Amazons then fought the Scythians, who, upon discovering their adversaries were females, decided to lay down their arms and have their young men produce children with the women warriors. In time the Scythians and Amazons paired, and together they left the northern Black Sea region, moving east to the

steppes between the Don and Volga rivers. From their union was born a matriarchal tribe in which women used bows and arrows, rode horses, and were required to kill an enemy before marrying. These people were known as the Sauromatians, though no ancient author gives the origins of this name.

Herodotus placed the Sauromatians on the steppes northeast of the Don River. Modern excavations, however, have turned up traces of their presence across a much wider area, from the eastern bank of the lower Don across the Volga and Ural rivers into the southern Ural steppes. Throughout this vast and open landscape archeologists have found west-ward oriented burials, bowls with rounded bottoms and inverted lips poorly fired from gritty clay, and metalwork and carved bone decorated with images of animals – all Sauromatian traits. Our work has shown that these people first began grazing their sheep, horses, and even the occasional camel on the steppes around Pokrovka ca. 600 BC. They arrive each spring and stay until autumn, when they took down their yurts and trekked south with their herds to winter in the milder climate of southern Kazakhstan or northern Uzbekistan.

In summer, the Sauromatians buried their dead near Pokrovka, occasionally reusing Bronze Age kurgans, but more often building anew. Each mound originally contained a single grave, but many were reused over a few centuries for as many as 25 secondary interments. The original burial was often that of a woman placed in a pit four to six feet deep in the center of the mound; sometimes short niches to the side of the pit held additional interments. Mortuary offerings, placed at her side, might include bronze arrowheads in a quiver, jewelry, bronze mirrors, stone altars, pottery, pieces of colored stone or ore, and perhaps horse trappings. A quarter of mutton lay either at her feet or at her head, food for her journey into the next world. After the burial pit was filled, a wall of packed yellow clay perhaps two feet high and three feet wide might have been built on the ground surface, encircling it. Dirt and sod had then been piled atop the pit and wall to complete the kurgan. Unfortunately the central burial of every large kurgan at Pokrovka had been robbed, either in antiquity or during the past three centuries, so that we have lost most of the precious artifacts. We do, however, find undisturbed male and female burials placed around the central pit; though not as rich, they still provide valuable information about the Sauromatians.

Archaeological evidence suggests that ca. 400 BC the Sauromatians began to be replaced by people known to ancient authors as Sirmatians or Sarmatians. No ancient sources comment on the origin of these people or their name. In contrast to the Sauromatians, who oriented their dead toward the setting sun, the Sarmatians buried their dead with their heads to the south. In general their burials are richer in imported items than those of the Sauromatians. There are also more Sarmatian than Sauromatian burials, suggestion the population was larger.

The transition from Sauromatians to Sarmatians seen between the Don and Volga is also apparent at the same time, ca. 400 BC, on the Eurasian steppes, farther east. Here the largest Sarmatian kurgans measure about 350 feet across. Thought to be the burials of chiefs of large tribal confederacies, these are known by Russian archaeologists as "tsar" kurgans. To the east, new confederacies of tribes may have been bringing their herds into the southern Ural steppes, assimilating the Sauromatians. Several artifacts found in Sauromatian burials at Pokrovka suggest that the winter homeland of these newcomers may have been located on one of the great east-west trade routes, perhaps somewhere in southern Kazakhstan. These finds include a bronze belt buckle from northern China and a set of hammered and chased gold plaques probably depicting snow leopards, which inhabit the Tien Shan Mountains of Kyrgyzstan and western China.

In general, females were buried with a wider variety and larger quantity of artifacts than males. We have recognized three different female classes, though not every burial fits neatly into one of these categories. The first group, numbering about 28 burials, contained spindle-whorls, fragments of deliberately broken mirrors, and stone and glass beads, artifacts typically associated with femininity and domesticity. The second group, about five burials whose mortuary offerings often included clay or stone altars, bone spoons, bronze

mirrors, and seashells, seem to have been priestesses who presided over the spiritual and cultic affairs of the family or clan. The grave goods of the third group included iron swords or daggers, bronze arrowheads, and whetstones to sharpen the weapons, suggesting that these seven females were warriors.

Some Russian scholars have argued that weapons found in female burials served a purely ritual purpose, to be wielded only in the afterworld, but the bones tell a different story. The bowed leg bones of one 13- or 14-year-old girl attest a life on horseback, and her array of arms included a dagger and dozens of arrowheads in a quiver made of wood and leather. It seems her amulets were also designed to reinforce her prowess, for she wore a bronze arrowhead in a leather pouch around her neck, and a great boar's tusk, which may originally have been suspended from her belt, lay at her feet. A bent arrowhead was found in the body cavity of another woman, suggesting that she had been killed in battle.

Our excavations have shown that some Early Iron Age Pokrovka females held a unique position in society. They seem to have controlled much of the wealth, performed rituals for their families and clan, rode horseback, and possibly hunted *saiga*, a steppe antelope, and other small game. In times of stress, when their territory or possessions were threatened, they took to their saddles, bows and arrows ready, to defend their animals, pastures, and clan. We hope that continued research, including excavation, radiocarbon dating, and DNA analysis, will tell us more about these nomads and their origins.

Because the Pokrovka nomads lived 1,000 miles east of the Don and Volga Sauromatians, and the Amazons known to the Greeks lived even farther west, they cannot have been the same people. They may, however, have been one of many similar nomadic tribes who occupied the Eurasian steppes in the Early Iron Age. If one believes Herodotus, they may even have been the far-flung contemporaries of the Amazon.

2. THE MUMMIES OF URUMCHI

(From *The Mummies of Urumchi* by Elizabeth Wayland Barber. Copyright © 1999 by Elizabeth Wayland Barber. Used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., pp. 23, 26, 32.)

The Mummies in the upstairs gallery of the Ürümchi Museum tax one's powers of description, so close to alive do they appear in death. They lie single file down the middle of a long, narrow chamber, arranged toe to head from oldest to most recent. The Cherchen people, on the southern rim of the Silk Road, has without doubt produced the most spectacular Tarim mummies so far, and of these the most famous is the three-thousand-year-old man who occupies the gallery's dusky center.

His face is at rest, eyes closed and sunken, lips slightly parted; his hands lie in his lap, while his knees and head are tilted up – like a man who has just drifted off to sleep in his hammock. Visitors tend to tiptoe and lower their voices. A two-inch beard covers his face, and his light brown hair has been twisted – plied from two strands, not braided from three – into two queues that hang halfway down his chest. Here and there white hairs glint among the yellow-brown, betraying his age – somewhere past fifty. He would have been an imposing figure in life, for he once stood six feet six inches tall.

Bright ocher-yellow face paint curls across his temple, sprouting short rays on its outer curve and reversing its curl as it meanders down to the flatland of his cheek before climbing across the great ridge of his nose – not a low bridged Asian nose, but a veritable Sierra Nevada of a nose – to the far side. Did such markings denote rank, affiliations, piety? Did well-wishers apply it to help him during his last hours, or after his death?

"Cherchen Man" (so the press dubbed him) also wears earrings, of a sort: a bit of bright red woolen yarn passes through each earlobe. If the thread once supported a further ornament, it is long gone.

Passing from the face, one's eye jumps between the violently colored leggings and the purply-red-brown two-piece suit that covers most of the man's body. Originally the man wore soft white deerskin boots

to above his knees – the left one is still there. But the right one has torn away, revealing horizontal stripes of gaudy red, yellow, and blue that put Ronald McDonald in the shade. Knitted socks, however, had not been invented yet. This man had simply wound colored hanks of combed wool around his legs and feet, to pad them and insulate against frost, much as East European peasants still do. Insulation was welcome. Untempered by the great oceans, the weather in this basin at the center of earth's largest continent swings from unbearable summer heat to icy winter cold. Where visible, the wool has been pressed together so lightly that one can hardly call it felt, although constant rubbing inside the boots would gradually compact it into a solid material.

We soon learned that the people of Cherchen had dug their graves into a geological formation of salt beds. That choice had probably been dictated partly by the fact that crops would not grow in salt, so using this space for burials would entail no loss of productive land. Furthermore, the salt, like dry heat, would suck the moisture out of the bodies and discourage microorganisms – an ideal cemetery for rapid mummification. But salt also brightens certain dye colors: it is sometimes used even today to intensify them during the manufacture of cloth and yarn.

The Cherchen people had such a fondness for clothes that they took piles of apparel with them to the next world. This single excavation, for example, produced ten hats, each different. One hat had the shape of a beret or tam-o'-shanter, made of dark brown wool in a looped technique that at first glance looks like knitting. But knitting, so far as we know, was not invented for another two thousand years. This hat used a needle and thread method known by the Scandinavian name of *nalbinding* ("needle binding"). The skilled maker not only increased the circle to the maximum width of the hat, then decreased the diameter again to fit snugly over the brow, but even managed to work a simple but elegant ribbed pattern at the same time. A slim stick, wrapped in places with fine thread, remains thrust into one quadrant of the cap, apparently the remnant of an ornament or hatpin.

3. FROM DESERT TO OASIS

(George W. O'Bannon, *From Desert and Oasis: Arts of the People of Central Asia*, Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, 1998 Introduction, pp. 9-12. Reproduced by permission of the Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia.)

The people of this area [Inner Asia] are a mix of Mongol, Turk, Persian and Arab origin. The Tajiks, who speak Persian, are descended from the original Indo-European population. The Mongols and Turks came in a series of migrations from Mongolia from the 8th c. onwards. The present day Uzbeks, Turkmens, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz have evolved from these two Asian groups, and their languages are predominantly Turkic. The Arabs may have first come with the spread of Islam in the 9th c. or with subsequent political changes and movements of people in Central Asia. They have adapted to the local culture and speak the language of the areas in which they live. Today the region is essentially Islamic in character...

...Prior to the Russian takeover in the 19th c., Central Asia was ruled by Khans, or kings, from the major cities. At the beginning of the 19th century. Bukhara was the strongest state. Khiva was another strong state, as was Kokand. Political boundaries fluctuated with petty wars. Turkmenistan was a kind of "no man's land" that changed from Bukharan and Khivan control to that of Persia. The Afghan kings in Kabul encroached on Bukhara from the south across the Amu Darya...

...Throughout time Central Asia has been a blend of settled and nomadic people. The rise and fall of empires has been due largely to conflicts between these two ways of living. The mountains and rivers provided great land for farming and settlement, whereas the deserts and arid climate created an ideal environment for the survival of nomads and a life based on raising livestock. Depending on politics and climate, these two systems waxed and waned, existed side by side, or came into conflict. Settlement demands order, control and planning; nomadism requires flexibility, mobility and opportunity.

Of the majority peoples, the Uzbeks, Turkmens, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz evolved out of a nomadic way of

life. The Tajiks represent an older, settled population...

...The Arabs are unique in having entered Central Asia from the south. They are mainly settled, agrarian people who became nomadic as economic or political conditions demanded. They mostly live near major cities, and in the past have allied themselves with ruling elites. For this reason, one often finds throughout these countries a combination of these two traditions in housing, marriage customs, familial relationships and special ceremonies.

4. LIFE ALONG THE SILK ROAD

(Susan Whitfield, John Murray, *Life Along the Silk Road*, Albemarle Street, London, 1999. Permission pending.)

At this point, we are all aware that many exciting events were occurring in Central Asia while Europe was still poorly settled and primitive mud villages. However, it has taken historians a long time to bring together all the pieces of the stories from these areas. Much of the research has been done by European historians and art historians who have tried to reconstruct life in Central Asia. Susan Whitfield, the Director of The Silk Road Project as well as a leading art historian at the British Museum in London, has constructed the life of the people on the Silk Road during the 250 year period from 750 AD to 1000 AD. In many ways, these readings can be compared the Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

The Merchant's Tale : Nanaivandak, 730-751

Nanaivandak was from Samarkand, a city under the rule of the Baghdad Caliphate. It had taken him several months to travel from Samarkand to Chang'an. There were scores of caravanserai, providing shelter for itinerant merchants and warehouse space for their animals and goods. His dress and heavily bearded face distinguished him from the Chinese, Turks and Tibetans and his language was the *lingua franca* of the Silk Road.

Although Nanaivandak paid heavy bribes to customs officers at the Chinese frontier, his profits from the sale of wool, jade and gems was considerable. In order to "bulk" up the weight of his wool, he made small slits in the bundles and allowed the sand of the journey to seep inside. He bought silk which was valued by his countrymen and by the Turks who lived on the northern borders of Sogdiana. Although silk was now made in Damascus by captured Chinese prisoners-of-war, the finest silks were still from China. When he was in Chang'an he purchased gifts for his family and then joined other merchants for an evening of entertainment by Sogdiana singers and dancers. The restaurants served on mats and low tables, Central Asian style and there was a ready flow of wine and dancing by young girls.

Nanaivanda's father took him on short trading trips when he was young and he immediately loved the journey itself, especially the mountains. He especially loved his visits to the Bactrian city of Balkh where the residents boasted that Alexander the Great had chosen a Bactrian bride and married her over 1000 years earlier. He remembered his first trip to China in 730 AD. They had traveled the northern route because of rumors of Tibetan troops along the southern route of Kashgar. They traded goods along the way but the brass, amber and coral were destined for Chang'an. The Chinese officials used the brass for ornaments for the girdles of officials and the Buddhists needed brass for statues. They brought golden ornaments worked by the artisans of Samarkand in the Persian style. It was a hard journey with freezing temperatures on the mountain passes. They had to be constantly watchful for bandits. By the summer they reached the region where the recently sheared sheep offered them another product for trade. The land was occupied by Turkic tribes, loosely confederated via a system of allegiance and marriage alliances. They lived in felt tents and the largest was richly decorated with silver and gold ornaments. The valley was festive; the horses were well-fed and sleek. The men spent the day hunting with their falcons and riding. The children held pony rides and the women packed for the move. When Nanaivandak and his uncle headed east, the tribes headed west.

They traveled along the western stretch of the Tarim Basin to China – a difficult route in winter and

dangerous in spring when the melting snows caused avalanches and ice falls. They collected fresh horses and yaks although they would change to camels when they reached the desert to the south. When they changed to the camels – an expensive fee since one camel could cost up to 14 bolts of silk – they were responsible for the injury or death of any camel during the period of hire. They had to also provide for food, fodder and fuel. The caravanserai owners were unhelpful and the road changed at every stage.

They stopped at Kucha, a thriving city-state and one of four Chinese garrison towns along the Silk Road. The town was protected by 30,000 troops, many of them Turks or local men. Then they settled into the long dull routine of desert travel – searing daytime heat, cold desert nights, dust storms or floods, the threat of bandits, sick camels. The inns were awful and often the only building in a deserted landscape. It was a relief to reach a large city with a good inn and fodder for their animals. The camels wore bells around their necks to warn people in the narrow streets of the towns and out in the desert the clinking could be heard far away. The camels traveled nose to tail with a string tying them together through wooden nose pegs. The cameleers were Chinese, Turks and Tibetans. Their shoes tied around their ankles to prevent sand from entering. The camels were two-humped Bactrians, renowned for their ability as storm-detectors and water-diviners. The Bactrian camel also grew long fur in the winter to protect them from the cold. The Chinese maintained an imperial herd of camels which they had exchanged for silk. Camels carried entertainers across the deserts and in the marketplaces of the Silk Road young boys would perform acrobatics on a camel's back or as many as eight musicians would be seated in a large wooden cradle atop a camel. In war, armies used up to 200 camels to carry their large guns into battle. Camels were also eaten.

Whenever possible, Nanaivandak and his uncle traveled with other merchants, usually on steppe ponies, *tarpans*. There were horror stories that circulated among the travelers – few wells, sudden winds sweeping down from the north, sandstorms. They would sometimes encounter the bones of small groups who had broken away or decided to take less well trodden routes. The greatest risk was bandits. His uncle told of one experience when a small group of merchants had left the caravan early to try to get a head start on business in the next town. They were ambushed and killed by bandits on the road and all their goods were taken. Nanaivandak saw evidence along the route: ruined and abandoned towns, carcasses in varying stages of decay, petrified trees, human and animal bones. Travelers did learn some secrets of survival. When the water was brackish, dough strings were boiled in the water, absorbing much of the salt. And when they reached Chang'an where over 200 merchants' guilds were represented in the market area, there were willow trees, a lake and blossoming fruit trees. There were over 3,000 shops in the small lanes of the market displaying the goods of its guild: silver and goldware, ginger, silk gauze, fresh fish, dried fish, crabs, goldfish, sugared cakes, saddlery, ironwork, scales and measures, medicine, flowers, vegetables as well as the services of the printer, pawnshop, safe-deposit shop, moneylender, brothels, teahouses and restaurants. Anything could be had in Chang'an.

Twenty-one years after his first journey, Nanaivandak noted there were many changes along the Silk Road. The Umayyad Caliphate had fallen and the Abassids moved the Arab capital from Damascus to Baghdad. The Western Turk confederation had been driven north and replaced by the Uighurs (another Turkic tribe). The Turghiz had signed a peace treaty with the Tibetans and combined to fight the Arabs. The Chinese continued to fight with the Tibetans for control of the Silk Road as well as the route across India into the Pamirs. The Tibetans were dominant in the west and every autumn raided the Chinese garrisons in the east, stealing the grain. Yet the Chinese empire remained pre-eminent because of excellent military leadership and some outstanding generals. Nanaivandak had been traveling for two decades and was accustomed to armies on the march. The armies usually left the merchants alone. Nanaivandak still loved the journey and the mountain landscapes as well as his zest for trade.

The Soldier's Tale: Seg Lhaton, 747-790

In the 780s Seg Lhaton, a Tibetan soldier, was quartered in a fort near Miran on the southern branch of the Silk Road, over 1000 miles from his home. The Tibetans now controlled the Silk Road from Sogdiana to China, blocking trade and diplomatic missions. Some merchants managed to go north through Uighur-held territory but the toll was high.

It was harvest time and the Tibetans were stocking up grain for the winter as well as a possible campaign against the Uighurs. Seg Lhaton, a squad leader, assigned his men to provision duty. Seg had not seen his own family in years and his military service was obligatory. The duty at Miran, a strategic location on the access road to Tibet, gave the town a new lease on life. The original canal system which provided water for the town had become partially clogged with sand and Seg's troops had to keep the remaining irrigation canals clear. The soldiers also were required to make bricks from the local soil, repair the fort and make new quarters. Another task was collecting firewood. When wood was not available, yak dung was used for heat. The soldiers were also responsible for making and repairing their own armor and clothing.

The most difficult duty was at the beacon forts outside Miran. Here the soldiers spent several weeks at a time. Soldiers at these stations could fall sick and suffered from lack of female companionship. When they were in the fort, the soldiers lived in small quarters. Their rubbish was thrown in a corner and when the room became too smelly and dirty it was turned into a latrine and eventually abandoned. The existence was rudimentary – little or no entertainment, no passing caravans – only time to recount battles of the past to pass the time.

Seg had fought many battles against the Chinese after the peace treaty between the Tibetans and the Chinese was broken in 737. Peace was not achieved again until 783. In one battle, the Tibetans had established their rule over the small kingdoms that controlled the Silk Route and the Gilgit river valley which led to northern India. In the summer of 747 the Tibetans were not so fortunate. They had devised a plan to trap the Chinese in narrow defiles as they moved down the valleys. The aim was for the Tibetan archers to make the Chinese soldiers easy targets. But the Chinese breeched the lines and the Tibetans were forced to flee, losing half their troops. The Tibetans needed time to regroup and gather fresh supplies. The Tibetans were confident that the Chinese would have no support in their new area. However, when the Tibetans moved forward they were surprised by the Chinese action. The Chinese had cut the bridge and the Tibetans were forced to retreat even further thanks to the leadership of the brilliant Chinese General Gao, really a Korean. General Gao worked swiftly and stealthily to execute Tibetan sympathizers and cut the Tibetan line of counter-attack.

This campaign, one of many against the Chinese over a long period of time, did give Seg a short leave at his family home in Tibet. However, he had to return to fight the Chinese again. Some of the battles became mighty epics in the history of both countries. A Chinese poet wrote:

> Kites and ravens peck men's guts,
> Fly with them dangling from their beaks
> And hang them high on boughs of barren trees,
> The troops lie mud-smeared in the grass
> And the generals acted all in vain.
> Now I see that weapons are the tools of evil.
> The Sage will only use them when he cannot do otherwise.

The Horseman's Tale: Kumtugh, 790-792

The horseman Kumtugh was a Uighur Turk, with a characteristically broad face, thick eyelashes and deep-set green eyes. His language, Uighur, was close to modern-day Turkish. His ponies were tarpans (*Equus przewalski),* age-old travelers of the Eurasian steppes. The tarpan has a large head and distinctive mane that stands up in summer, although in the winter the mane and hair grow long and shaggy to keep the horse warm. The herd was made up of several hundred head on their way to the Chinese border to be sold to the Chinese government.

The Uighurs were a confederation of Turkic tribes, the same people who later migrated west into what is today Turkey. The T'ang Dynasty encouraged the disagreements between the Eastern and Western Turkic tribes and inflamed their arguments, and in 630 defeated the Eastern Turks, resettling their people in Chang'an and other regions. The Western Turks were also weakened by internal dissension. The Uighurs, one of the Turks' vassal tribes rebelled, built a walled-city capital called Karabalghasun, and established an empire in 744. In 756, the heir apparent to the T'ang throne usurped power and called on the Uighurs for help. In return for their help, the Uighurs asked for the right to plunder Chang'an and also Luoyang, the second city of the region. The Uighurs supported the Chinese, boosting the Chinese fear of Uighur forces. One of the conditions was the Uighur demand that border markets be established for the trade of horses and silk. The Uighurs regularly brought herds of thousands of ponies for sale to the Chinese government at a fixed price of forty bolts of silk each, though a pony could be bought for as little as one bolt elsewhere. The Uighurs benefitted from their trade, although the Chinese limited their financial losses by regularly defaulting on payment. The Sogdian influence was great on the Uighurs. Many Uighurs abandoned their nomadic lifestyle and adopted the Sogdian script, and this script was later passed on to the Mongols.

The horse trade flourished. The land and water in Central China contains too little calcium for successful horse-breeding and since the Chinese learned the arts of horsemanship, their neighbors were their main source of new stock. The Chinese preferred horses with Arab ancestry to the pure tarpan pony but the herds always contained a mixture of the two. Chinese soldiers rode on saddles without stirrups – a Central Asian invention. When the Tang dynasty came into power in 618 there were only 5,000 horses in the imperial pastures; by the mid-century the number had increased to over 700,000. The Uighurs were consummate horsemen. Kumtugh was a typical horseman. He knew how to pick the best pony for each job and each season. For summer it was essential to choose a horse with a thin hide that had not worked too hard in the previous months. The best pony for winter had a thick hide, long hair and a round stomach, with legs that rose straight from the ground. Kumtugh and his peers had been riding before they could walk and were more at home on horseback than on foot.

In the summer of 790 Kumtugh was bringing several hundred from a herd in the south to join a large caravan across the steppe. He carried various horse medicines with him, including a remedy to relieve colic caused by cold water from desert wells – a mixture of wormwood, fennel, apricot kernels, rhubarb, ground ginger and a tree-growing fungus. Before he had left for the journey, Kumtugh had consulted with his grandmother, a respected shaman in his tribe. Kumtugh's family lived beyond the Altai mountains, one of ten Uigher tribes, each with allegiance to its own leader, the tutak. The area was a huge pasturage and shelter for vast herds of camels, horses, yaks and sheep. To improve his military skills, Kumtugh and his friends played many games and sports, including archery competitions and hunting expeditions into the mountains in search of wolves and deer. They trained young hawks to hunt together and rode into the mountains to watch them seek prey.

Kumtugh was excited when he learned he was to join the caravan to Chang'an. The riches of the markets in Chang'an, the wine-shops and tea-houses with beautiful Kuchean girls and the courtesan quarter all appealed to him. During the caravan ride they covered little ground each day because of the vastness of the herd. In the evening they stopped and pitched their tents, prepared cooking fires and allowed the animals to graze. The main food was meat but mare's milk was used extensively for butter cheese and an alcoholic drink. When they couldn't find firewood, they used either yak or camel dung. But Kumtugh was not allowed to proceed to Chang'an since the number of Uighers allowed into the capital had been reduced since some drunken Uighur youth had been disruptive. However, Kumtugh had to return home because Uighur troops had been defeated by some Tibetans in his homelands and it was time to prepare for a counteroffensive. The new army was a combination of Uighur and Chinese forces but there were 50 to 60 thousand Uighurs to 2000 Chinese.

The Uighurs considered themselves more than a match for the Tibetan cavalry. Their bows were strengthened with horn and sinew and their wooden arrows were flighted so as to produce a loud whistling sound to intimidate the enemy. The Chinese infantry had longbows with steel arrows that could pierce Tibetan armor. The Tibetan infantry were the main threat because they were heavily armed and encased in armor as well as being well known for their bravery under attack. The Tibetan army was reinforced with Turkic soldiers who were excellent cavalrymen. Kumtugh did not survive the battle. The Uighur and Chinese armies were routed by the iron-clad Tibetan infantry. His body remained on the battlefield and his family wore the facial scars that were part of the Uighur ritual of mourning.

The Princess's Tale: Taihe, 821-843

In the autumn of 821 Taihe, an imperial princess rode in a *howdah* on a bactrian camel. As the sister of the Chinese emperor, she had been chosen as "tribute" – on her way to wed an Uighur Khagan. Although she was from the "west," her clothing and interests reflected the "east" – dances from Sogdiana, Kuchean music, perfumes from India, polo from western regions. She was an excellent horsewoman and may have ridden a breed known as the Aryan horse, common around the Caspian Sea.

Taihe was the fourth Chinese princess to be promised to a Uighur kaghan. Her elder sister had been offered but she had requested permission to be ordained as a Daoist priestess, thus avoiding any thread of future marriage alliances. This was a popular course for the Tang princess's and 15 imperial princesses had been ordained. It had been decided that Taihe would replace her sister only a month before. It would take the princess over four months to cover the 1000 miles to her new home with her large retinue. The route began at the northernmost reaches of the Yellow River in a great curve called the Ordos. The Gobi was beyond but first they passed through Taiyuan, a famous wine-making town. Soon after this she was out of Chinese held territory to the land of the Uighurs – a land where there was little to do or look at. When they reached the capital city of Karabalghasun, Princess Taihe was shown into a large tent. With thick rugs covering the walls and floors. There was also Sogdian and Chinese woven silk, camphorwood, sanderswood and furs of every description. Fruits and nuts were available. Taihe was asked to dress in Uighur fashion and her hair was dressed in large loops and decorated with gold and lapis pins and animal ornaments. As Khatun, Taihe had power in the Uighur court, maintaining her own quarters.

We know nothing of Taihe's relationship with her new husband. China during the Tang Dynasty was not particularly prudish; foot binding only began to appear in the next century, divorce by mutual consent was still part of the legal code and widows were allowed to remarry. Uighur women had even fewer restrictions than their Chinese counterparts. Chinese authors produced explicit sex manuals and the "Art of the Bedchamber" was regarded as a branch of medicine. Deprivation of sex was considered injurious to health. Erotic poetry, essays and literature also circulated, written by respected literati. Reproduction was openly discussed. The princess's husband died only two years after her arrival. She was supposed to commit suicide but she refused to do so, making the concession of slashing her face with a knife, a traditional Uighur sign of mourning. Taihe may have married the new kaghan. But by that time there was dissent at court and frequent incursions by Kirghiz armies.

The Kirghiz were a forest-dwelling people from the north-west of the Uighur empire. They had been in conflict with the Uighurs for twenty years and although their language was Turkic they had light hair and green or blue eyes. Many of their customs differed from those of the Turks. In 840, the Kirghiz forces captured the Uighur capital and the city residents fled, Princess Taihe among them. The Kirghiz held control of this Uighur land until 924 when the Khitans, a people from north-east China, moved in. Meanwhile the fleeing Uighurs reached an area on the Chinese border. Food and clothing were sent at Taihe's behest, but in the spring of 843 the Chinese attacked and killed thousands of Uighurs. Others fled south on the Silk Road to Ganzhou on the Gansu corridor and Kocho in the Tarim basin. The princess traveled south and reached Chang'an in the late spring of 843. The emperor pleaded with his

ministers to let her return. After two decades, her Central Asian life was over.

The Monk's Tale: Chudda, 855-870

In 870 a Kashmiri monk named Chudda was practicing medicine in Dunhuang, living in a monastery 12 miles outside of town. On this day he was in the town, selling scrolls, paintings, booklets and prayer sheets proffering "protection against all conceivable misfortunes." There were other monks offering divination, interpreting dreams, hexagrams, and physiognomy. There were also almanac readers and herbalists, acupuncturists and palmists, masseurs, surgeons and children's doctors and both Buddhist and Taoist exorcism specialists. In addition, there were no fewer than 850 drugs from Greece, Arabia, Persia, India, Tibet and China. However, medicine was not confined solely to herbal remedies. There were schools of acupuncturists, pulse readers and masseurs. There was even a handbook that advised Chinese magistrates on the conduct of post-mortems. Spells, charms and exorcism were an essential part of most traditions.

Chudda had entered the monastery in Kashmiri as a child and took the vows to become a fully ordained monk in his twenties. Joining the monastery was something one did, a way of life. Chudda kept his vows and attended all the services, but he was puzzled by the extremism which caused some monks to mutilate themselves. There were wide spread stories about relationships between monks and nuns. A few communities in Central Asia disregarded the Buddhist rule forbidding sex and lived in towns with their wives and children.

Chudda had learned some Chinese at his monastery in Kashmiri and in the spring of 855 he decided to make a pilgrimage to Wutai mountain, NE of Chang'an. Wutai Mountain was the home of a famous bodhisattva, Mañjuśrī. As soon as Chudda made the decisions, other monks asked if they could join him or if he would bring things back for them. He did ask his young novice to accompany him, seeking shelter in monasteries and along the road. They did carry some fodder for the horses, some money for incidental expenses and extra clothing for the mountains. There was also a medicine chest of herbs and charms.

They followed the route of what is today the Karakorum highway – Jhelum river to the Jhelum-Indus watershed, south to Taxila (where Alexander the Great passed through in the 4th century) the home of Aśoka the great Indian Buddhist king of the Mauryan dynasty, now into the Indus valley and over the Malakand pass to the Swat river. A large community of Buddhist monks still lived in the valley, but they were minute when compared to the story written by a 7th c. Buddhist monk who told of 1,400 monasteries and 18,000 clergy. Padmasambhava, the founder of the Red Hat sect of Tibetan Buddhism had been born in this valley.

By the summer, Chudda and his servant had traveled to Kashgar, a trip which could have been accomplished in less than a month with good weather and fit ponies. Now they had to cross the Tarim basin before winter. They had to cross a 15,800 foot pass that was covered with snow even in the summer. When they crossed, they entered a fertile valley where the busy Silk Road provided them with news. It was evident that there was unrest among the people who lived in the region. But the pilgrims pushed on, over treacherous upper reaches where the men and their horses suffered from cold and altitude. Even in the summer the mountain landscape was desolate. At the high passes the only companions were marmots and mountain goats; as they descended they saw Turkic sheep and yak herders. The monks could not eat the provisions offered them by the herders because they were vegetarians. They left the high Pamirs for a warm, fertile field covered with flowers and herbs. They tried to find out the names and uses of several strange growths but since they did not share a language, Chudda took samples to find out about later. After Tashkurgan they received permission from the Chinese authorities to continue their journey to Khotan.

The next two weeks were brutal. They had grown accustomed to high mountain air but here the heat was searing, there was no breeze and the sand stretched into the distance. They joined a caravan of merchants and became familiar with the desert and entered Khotan, a city situated between two rivers which

washed jade down from the mountains. Here they rested for several weeks among a large community of Buddhist monks. There was plenty of cereals and fruits to eat because of the abundance of the region.

There were many sites to see in Khotan and many of the statues were from other countries. There was a Buddha figure with a jeweled crown from Kashmir. There was a statute of Buddha said to have been carved in central India and then to have flown to Khotan of its own accord after Buddha's death. Khotan was full of stories and legends – stories of rats who ate through nomad's bridles, of a princess who smuggled silkworm cocoons and mulberry seeds out of China and many others, all of which were commemorated by monuments and paintings.

After their rest, Chudda and his servant continued on the Dunhuang as part of a caravan. Other independent travelers attached themselves to this large caravan. On the third day there was a swirling hot wind and the two galloped ahead but they got separated from the caravan. For the next few days they followed the sun east, running out of water after three days. Exhaustion and fear forced them to stop where Chudda set up a small Buddhist shrine and began to pray. He was rescued but only after his servant had died. He was found only 200 feet from the main path! When he reached Dunhuang, Chudda spent time in prayer for his dead friend and sent a letter back to the monastery in Kashmir with some monks moving west.

A few months later Chudda continued his pilgrimage, aware that Buddhist monks had suffered extreme persecution in China a decade before. During the journey he stayed with the main party at all times and when he reached Chang'an stayed only long enough to visit Wutai mountain. He did not enjoy his travels in China finding the countryside in a mood of depression because of a heavy tax burden. Wutai, or Five Terraces, mountain is called that because of its five flattened peaks, some of which are above 9000 feet. Monastery peaks had been built on the peaks and surrounding areas since the 3rd c. AD and there were over 200 establishments. In the 7th and 8th centuries the monasteries flourished. Chudda stayed at Wutai for several months, visiting all the temples and shrines. There were always sutra lectures to attend and vegetarian feasts. He left in deep winter and in Chang'an applied for permission to return home. In Dunhuang he stopped to paint copies of the wall paintings and sutras and when he learned that his government in Kashmir had fallen he decided to stay. Over a decade had now passed. Chudda sat at his stall and awaited his next patient. He had been seduced by the Silk Road into staying.

The Courtesan's Tale: Larishka, 839-890

Larishka lived in the city of Kucha on the northern Silk Road. Like her grandmother and mother before her, Larishka had been trained as an entertainer, attending music, singing and dancing classes but specializing in the Kuchean lute, a four-stringed instrument with a bent neck. She played solo as well as in an orchestra with percussion and woodwinds. Kuchean music was famed along the Silk Road, from Samarkand to Chang'an. Chinese music was based largely on the tuning of the Kuchean lute. Kuchean orchestras accompanies singers in musical dramas, many of which began in India, but absorbed new elements and adapted to local culture. They varied from renditions of traditional Indian legends and stories of the gods to depictions of everyday life. Kuchean singers could sing in many languages, including Sanskrit and Kuchean dancers were renowned for their skill. Many of the dances were not unlike Indian dance but they also adapted the famous Sogdian "whirling" dance performed by both men and women.

The walled city of Kucha was about half way between Kashgar and Kocho. Its people and languages were Indo-Europeans and the people continued to follow Hinayana Buddhism, rather than Mahayana Buddhism, with great statues of the Buddha flanking the western gate. The city was under the jurisdiction of the Kocho Uighurs. Larishka remembered when the Uighurs arrived in Kucha, bringing their traditional felt tents piled on camels and carriages. Kucha was used to garrisons of foreign soldiers. In the past the city had been one of China's four western garrisons and the Tibetans had also been occupiers. In a previous century the Abbasid Caliphate had sent in troops.

Larishka had originally left Kucha when she was a young girl. She had been noticed by a Uighur general from Kocho and she accompanied him on his return to Kocho to entertain his guests. She now joined hundreds of other men and women who traveled in the soldier's wake. Larishka was recognized as a professional musician but the general soon let it be known he expected other services and he became the first of several such "patrons," Uighurs, an Aza chief and a Chinese commander. But after a period of time, the Chinese man announced he no longer needed her services and sold her as a courtesan to a "stepmother."

In the city of Chang'an the courtesan quarter lay SE of the imperial city. The woman who ran the houses were mostly former courtesans. The houses were registered and paid taxes for which they received government protection. The houses provided women for all purposes from just sex to those who offered cultural skills. Larishka was dependent upon her stepmother for everything: food, clothing, cosmetics, perfumes and musical instruments. One of the most famous Chang'an courtesans was able to support herself on the money she earned from her patrons for her poetry. This woman eventually went to live in a Taoist residence but still held parties. She was eventually arrested for beating her maidservant to death and executed in 871.

Larishka grew old in Chang'an, unable to find a lover who would offer her a separate residence. As time passed, she spent more time training the young girls and chatting with the stepmother, hoping to take over as her successor. Kuchean music was no longer as popular. In the autumn of 880, a rebel group overran the city and the rebel chief declared himself emperor of a new dynasty. Then the imperial forces regrouped and returned to the city. Larishka's house was attacked and her stepmother and older servants killed immediately. Girls were raped, Larishka survived but the rest of her companions and her dog was dead. She fled in terror towards her old home in Kucha. She was allowed to join a group of merchants, begging for food and transport. Several months later she reached Kucha, twenty-six years after she had left, where she established a house of her own. But she never forgot that night in Chang'an.

The Nun's Tale: Miaofu, 880-961

The abbot comforted her by describing the joys she would encounter after death. He led the clergy in chanting *The Sutra of Impermanence.* Miaofu was the former abbess of a large nunnery in Dunhuang. It was 961 and China was being reunited under the Song Dynasty. She drifted in and out of consciousness, reliving memories of her youth.

She was a girl again, preparing for her ordination. When her turn came she stepped forward and prostrated herself in front of the great statue of the Buddha. One of the nuns took a knife and cut her long hair near the roots. Her head was washed and shaved smooth. She then recited her ten vows, was presented with monastic robes and a begging bowl. Miaofu's parents were devout Buddhists and did not object to her entering a monastic life. She was only 11 when she was ordained, although the minimum age stipulated by the Buddhists was twelve. After her ordination a local monk complained that many of the young nuns were too young to understand Buddha's teaching. Many of the more doctrinaire monks exhibited considerable prejudice against female clergy. Women were further down the chain of rebirth than men and Buddhist texts made it clear that Buddha had only accepted women as part of the monastic order after considerable persuasion from his own mother. Nevertheless, there were five nunneries in the Dunhuang area, the largest housing almost 200 nuns.

The process of ordination was more difficult for women than men. It took the nuns two years longer and were required to take additional precepts for full ordination. Miaofu received her temple name, which means "Wonderful Blessings." She was taught all the duties of a nun as well as how to receive guests. She was expected to memorize sutras and say them throughout the day. The monastery had plots and farmland but they were worked by serfs and tenant farmers. Since the income of the monastery was tax-free, many local land owners pledged their land to the monastery while they continued to work and profit from it. Others purchased ordination certificates although they continued to live ordinary lives with their families.

In preparation for her full ordination, Miaofu attended sutra lectures and classes with monks who were her guides. Since she was literate, she was given sutras to read, memorize and chant during her work as well as instructed in meditation techniques and the beginnings of Sanskrit. The Buddhist canon consisted of three parts, known by their Sanskrit name *Tripitaka* (literally, "Three Baskets"): the sutras (the lectures of Buddha); monastic rule (the Vinaya); and commentaries on sutras written by monks after the time of Buddha. The ordination was a complex ceremony with special constructions and hundred of monks and nuns ordained each year.

Life in the nunnery was not as ample as the monastery where she had trained. Many of the monks had accumulated wealth by lending out monastic goods at a high rate of interest. When the debt was defaulted, the monk gained the land of the debtor. Commerce and industry was the arena for men and there were few opportunities for nuns to gain wealth. Miaofu's family had given her a considerable sum of money when she was ordained and she was determined to increase her wealth. Over the years she invested in land which brought her small annuity and she gained patrons from among the local elite who valued her education. She was made abbess of the largest monastery in Dunhuang when she was barely forty. During her tenure the nunnery gained possession of more land and other properties. She hoped she would be reborn in heaven or at least be reincarnated as a human. She owned several silk robes (although they were against the vow of poverty) but she left them to the monks and nuns; her servant girl was left to her niece. She died the day of the Ghost Festival, the main festival of giving.

5. PRINCES OF LEARNING: AVICENNA, AL-BURUNI

(Halsell, Grace, Princes of Learning, in *Aramco World*, January/February 1990. Reprinted by Permission.)

Central Asian heritage was not only transmitted by means of beautiful architecture, unique weaving designs and oral traditions. The region also nurtured a few famous people of the time who contributed to the development of modern philosophy, astronomy, math, medicine and other sciences. The following story talks about two famous "princes of learning" of their time: Avicenna and Al-Biruni. The next story continues the theme and describes the life and work of a famous scientist and astronomer of the time, Ulugh Beg.

Avicenna

In Bukhara, Uzbekistan, I felt lucky to be in the home town of Ibn Sina, born in 980 and known in the West as Avicenna, a philosopher and the greatest physician of his time – indeed, the greatest name in medicine until about 1500. He wrote *The Canon of Medicine*, a systematic encyclopedia based on the achievements of Greek and Arab physicians: The work was translated into Latin and used as a textbook in medieval Europe. For centuries considered the "prince of all learning," Avicenna's works are still studied in theological, philosophical, pharmacological and medical circles.

Walking around modern Bukhara, a city of half a million people, I reflected on the library where Avicenna studied. Now obliterated, it was one of several private libraries in the city that were open to public use at a time when manuscripts were published only through the tedious labor of copyists. Writing 1000 years ago, Avicenna reports on the free use of a sultan's royal library in Bukhara:

> I found there many rooms filled with books which were arranged in cases, row upon row. One room was allotted to works on Arabic philology and poetry, another to jurisprudence and so forth, the books on each particular science having a room to themselves. I inspected the catalogue of ancient Greek authors and looked for the books which I required; I saw in this collection books of which few people have heard even the names, and which I myself have never seen either before or since.

Al-Buruni

I tried to imagine what life was like back in the days of al-Biruni, born near here, in Khiva, in 973, who searched into every branch of human knowledge: history, law, sociology, literature, ethics, philosophy,

mathematics and science.

It was al-Biruni who anticipated the principles of modern geology and laid the foundation for astronomy. He composed an astronomical encyclopedia and made vital contributions to geometrical problems. Al-Biruni gave an accurate way to determine latitude and longitude, investigated the relative speeds of sound and light, and – 600 years before Galileo – discussed the possibility of the earth's rotation around its own axis.

In *Vestiges of the Past,* written in the year 1000 he urges, "We must clear our minds from all causes that blind people to the truth – old customs, partisan spirit, personal rivalry or passion [and] the desire for influence, in order to be able to record historical events with objectivity and accuracy."

6. ULUGH-BEG: THE FATHER OF ASTRONOMY

(*Central Asian Monuments*, edited by Hasan B. Paksoy, Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1992. Permission pending.)

Bukhara's sister city, Samarkand, is equally a center of learning and history. Here Tamerlane (Timur) created a series of royal gardens so numerous, wrote Clavijo, a Spaniard who visited Samarkand in 1404, "that a traveler who approaches the city sees only the mountainous height of trees, and the houses embowered against them remain invisible."

Timur, born near Samarkand in 1336, sent back to the city armies of craftsmen and artisans from the extensive lands he conquered and had them put to work embellishing his capital. But it was Timur's grandson, Ulugh Beg, who made his grandfather's capital into what Timur had dreamed: "Samarkand the Golden," a center of Muslim civilization. An artist himself, Ulugh Beg enriched Samarkand with superb buildings, such as Shah Zinde, a honeycomb of 60 mausoleums and mosques, of which 20 remain today. Domes and arches and other Islamic architectural splendors glisten with intricate Arabic calligraphy and geometric designs that must have dazzled the early caravan travelers just as they amaze today's visitor.

Were it only for his role as prince, viceroy and martyr, few scholars would know of Ulugh Beg. But his memory lives on because he was an observatory builder, patron of astronomy, and astronomer in his own right. He was certainly the most important observational astronomer of the 15th century. He was one of the first to advocate and build permanently mounted astronomical instruments. His catalogue of 1018 stars (some sources count 1022) was the only such undertaking carried out between the times of Claudius Ptolemy (ca. 170 AD) and Tycho Brahe (ca. 1600). And his attitude towards scientific endeavors was surprisingly modern.

The administration of Transoxiana was the responsibility of Ulugh Beg's father for most of Ulugh Beg's life. The prince had the opportunity (and an inclination) to pursue scholarly matters. His interest in astronomy dates from an early age, when he visited the remains of the Maragha Observatory, made famous by the astronomer Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (1201-74). The principal accomplishment at Maragha was the Ilkhanic Tables.

A principal source of our information about the astronomical activity at Samarkand is a letter of one Ghiyath al-Din Jamshid al-Kashi (d. 1429), which is available in Turkish and English. This letter, originally in Persian, was written in 1421 or 1422. From it we deduce that serious astronomical activity began in Samarkand in 1408-10, and that the construction of Ulugh Beg's observatory was begun in 1420. Among the astronomers known to have been active at Samarkand, we know only a few by name, but according to al-Kashi there were sixty or seventy scholars at the madrasa who were well enough versed in mathematics to participate in some capacity in the astronomical observations and/or seminars.

A number of instruments were used for the observations of the planets and for determining the relative position of the stars. The largest instrument in Samarkand was the so-called Fakhri sextant. It was a 60-degree stone arc mounted on the north-south meridian line. Such an instrument was used to determine the transit altitude of stars (i.e. their maximum angular distances above the horizon). From the most

southern and norther positions of the Sun, observed over the course of a year, one can easily determine the obliquity of the ecliptic (i.e., the tilt of the Earth's axis of rotation with respect to the plane of its orbit). The meridian altitude of the Sun at the moment of the vernal or autumnal equinox allows one (by definition) to determine one's latitude.

The most interesting thing about the Fakhri sextant in Samarkand was that its radius was 40 meters! (This is very nearly equal to the height of the dome of the 200-inch reflector at Palomar Mountain, California.) The Fakhri sextant was by far the largest meridian instrument ever built. It could achieve a resolution of a several seconds of arc – on the order of a six-hundredth of a degree, or the diameter of an American penny at a distance of more than half a kilometer.

Because the Fakhri sextant was an arc fixed on the meridian, it could only be used for determining the declinations of celestial bodies. Because it was a 60-degree arc, it could not be used to observe stars along the full north-south meridian. Thus, it could not be used, say, to determine the angular separations of pairs of stars, or for observing stars near the northern or southern horizons. Consequently, other observational instruments were used at Samarkand. These were made of metal and wood and were on the order of 1 meter in size. Hand held astrolobes are not to be included in this list because they were "star finders" and were used for time determination, rather than for the accurate determination of stellar or planetary positions.

Typically, two people were required to make individual observations at any given time. At Samarkand it was the practice for a larger number of people to discuss the results. In modern times, this is like peer review, the purpose of which is to eliminate sources of error and to ensure the health of the observational program.

The foreword to Ulugh Beg's *Zij* contains four parts: 1) the chronology, describing various systems of time reckoning; 2) practical astronomy (how observations are made and used); 3) the apparent motions of the Sun, Moon, and planets, based on a geocentric system of the universe; and 4) astrology.

Besides the tables of motions of the Sun, Moon and planets, Ulugh Beg's *Zij* was significant for its catalogue of about 1000 stars, giving their names and ecliptic coordinates.

The astronomical programs carried out in Muslims lands between the 9th and 15th centuries were far more extensive than anything carried out by the ancient Greeks, with the possible exception of Hipparchus. The Arabs honored learning and kept alive the study of astronomy by preserving Ptolemy's *Almagest* and adding to its mathematical formulation. The influence of the Samarkand Observatory on European astronomy was more indirect than direct. While copies of Ulugh Beg's *Zij* existed in various libraries such as Oxford and Paris not long after its composition, it only became known in Europe in the mid-17th century, nearly five decades after the publication of Tycho Brahe's much more accurate data.

While recognition of Ulugh Beg's contributions to astronomy was delayed, an extensive body of information now exists on the activity of his observatory in Samarkand. We now know that at the time Ulugh Beg's observatory flourished it was carrying out the most advanced observations and analysis being done anywhere. In the 1420s and 1430s Samarkand was the astronomical capital of the world.

7. THE ADVENTURES OF IBN BATTUTA

(Ross E. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the 14th Century*, London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986. Permission pending.)

In the pre-modern period, probably the most famous Muslim traveler in the Central Asian region was Ibn Battuta. He was a judge in Morocco who traveled throughout much of Asia from 1325 to 1350. He passed through Central Asia in 1333, more than 100 years after the Mongol conquests. Battuta traveled simultaneously as a Muslim Pilgrim, a scholar of jurisprudence, a member of worldly literati elite, and an adventurer. His voyages took him primarily though regions and among

like minds who held the Sacred Law of Islam as the foundation of their social order. In writing down his memoirs, Ibn Battuta wrote about his real and imagined encounters with powerful men as well as his finances, sex life and health. But he also concentrated on the religious condition of the region. When he visited Bukhara he said, "there is not one of its inhabitants today who possesses any theological learning or makes any attempt to acquire it." Before the Mongol conquest, Bukhara was one of the centers of Muslim theological scholarship. His mental map of Bukhara included sacred history, the tombs of its holy men, mosques, mausoleums, hospices, colleges. What he was really worried about was Islam's essential condition. In his travels, which took him from Bukhara to Samarkand via Qarshi, then to Tirmiz on the Amu River and finally to Balkh, he apparently found good reason to worry about Islam in Central Asia. The following are excerpts of Battuta's writing on religion and other realities of the 14th century Central Asia.

Isfahán is one of the largest and fairest of cities, but the greater part of it is now in ruins, as a result of the feud between Sunnis and Shi'ites, which is still raging there. It is rich in fruits, among its products being apricots of unequaled quality with sweet almonds in their kernels, quinces whose sweetness and size cannot be paralleled, splendid grapes, and wonderful melons. Its people are good looking, with dear white skins tinged with red, exceedingly brave, generous, and always trying to outdo one another in procuring luxurious *viands* [or meals]. Many curious stories are told of this last trait in them. The members of each trade form corporations, as also do the leading men who are not engaged in trade, and the young unmarried men; these corporations then engage in mutual rivalry, inviting one another to banquets, in the preparations for which they display all their resources. I was told that one corporation invited another and cooked its viands with lighted candles, then the guests returned the invitation and cooked their viands with silk.

We hired a wagon and traveled to the town of Qiram, which forms part of the territories of Sultan Uzbeg Khan and has a governor called Tuluktumur. On hearing of our arrival the governor sent the *imam* to me with a horse; he himself was ill, but we visited him and he treated us honorably and gave us gifts. He was on the point of setting out for the town of Sari, the capital of the Khan, so I prepared to travel along with him and hired wagons for that purpose. These wagons have four large wheels and are drawn by two or more horses, or by oxen or camels, according to their weight. The driver rides on one of the horses and carries a whip or wooden goad. On the wagon is put a light tent made of wooden laths bound with strips of hide and covered with felt or blanket-cloth, and it has grilled windows so that the person inside can see without being seen. One can do anything one likes inside, sleep, eat, read or write, during the march. The wagons conveying the baggage and provisions are covered with a similar tent which is locked.

We set out with the amir Tuluktumur and his brother and two sons. At every halt the Turks loose their horses, oxen and camels, and drive them out to pasture at liberty, night or day, without shepherds or guardians. This is due to the severity of their laws against theft. Any person found in possession of a stolen horse is obliged to restore it with nine others; if he cannot do this, his sons are taken instead, and if he has no sons he is slaughtered like a sheep. They do not eat bread nor any solid food, but prepare a soup with a kind of millet, and any meat they may have is cut into small pieces and cooked in this soup.

Everyone is given his share in a plate with curdled milk, and they drink it, afterwards drinking curdled mare's milk, which they call *qumizz*. They have also a fermented drink prepared from the same grain, which they call *buza* [beer] and regard as lawful to drink. It is white in color; I tasted it once and found it bitter, so I left it alone. They regard the eating of sweetmeats as a disgrace. One day during Ramadan I presented Sultan Uzbeg with a plate of sweetmeats which one of my companions had made, but he did no more than touch them with his finger and then place it in his mouth.

Thereupon the *mahalla* approached (the name they give to it is the *ordu*) and we saw a vast town on the move with all its inhabitants, containing mosques and bazaars, the smoke from the kitchens rising in the air

(for they cook while on the march), and horse-drawn wagons transporting them. On reaching the encampment they took the tents off the wagons and set them upon the ground, for they were very light, and they did the same with the mosques and shops.

Then her brother, whose name was Kifali Qaras, arrived with five thousand horsemen, fully accoutred in armor. When they prepared to meet the princess, her brother, dressed in white, rode a grey horse, having over his head a parasol ornamented with jewels. On his right hand he had five princes and the same number on his left hand, all dressed in white also, and with parasols embroidered in gold over their heads. In front of him were a hundred foot soldiers and a hundred horsemen, who wore long coats of mail over themselves and their horses, each one of them leading a saddled and armored horse carrying the arms of a horseman, consisting of a jeweled helmet, a breastplate, a bow, and a sword, and each man had in his hand a lance with a pennant at its head. Most of these lances were covered with plaques of gold and silver. These led horses are the riding horses of the sultan's son. His horsemen were divided into squadrons, two hundred horsemen in each squadron. Over them was a commander, who had in front of him ten of the horsemen, fully accoutred in armor, each leading a horse, and behind him ten colored standards, carried by ten of the horsemen, and ten kettledrums slung over the shoulders of ten of the horsemen, with whom were six others sounding trumpets and bugles and fifes. The khatun rode out with her guards, maidens, slave boys and servants, these numbering about five hundred, all wearing silken garments, embroidered with gold and encrusted with precious stones. She herself was wearing a garment of gold brocade, encrusted with jewels, with a crown set with precious stones on her head, and her horse was covered with a saddle-cloth of silk embroidered in gold. On its legs were bracelets of gold and round its neck necklaces set with precious stones, and her saddle frame was covered with gold ornamented with jewels. Their meeting took place in a flat piece of ground about a mile distant from the town. Her brother dismounted to her, because he was younger than her, and kissed her stirrup and she kissed his head. The commanders and princes also dismounted and they all kissed her stirrup, after which she set out with her brother.

On reaching Hajj Tarkhan [Astrkhan], where we had parted from Sultan Uzbeg, we found that he had moved and was living in the capital of his kingdom. We traveled on the river Itil [Volga] and the neighboring waters, which were frozen over, and used to break a piece of the ice whenever we needed water, and put it in a cauldron till it melted, when we used it for drinking and cooking. On the fourth day we reached the city of Sará, which is the capital of the Sultan. We visited him, and after we had answered his questions about our journey and the king of the Greeks and his city he gave orders for our maintenance and lodging. Sará is one of the finest of towns, of immense extent and crammed with inhabitants, with fine bazaars and wide streets. We rode out one day with one of the principal men of the town, intending to make a circuit of the place and find out its size. We were living at one end of it and we set out in the morning, and it was after midday when we reached the other.

One day we walked across the breadth of the town, and the double journey, going and returning, took half a day, this too through a continuous line of houses, with no ruins and no orchards. It has thirteen cathedrals and a large number of other mosques. The inhabitants belong to diverse nations; among them are Mongols, who are the inhabitants and rulers of the country and are in part Muslims, As [Ossetes], who are Muslims, and Qipchaqs, Circassians, Russians, and Greeks, who are all Christians. Each group lives in a separate quarter with its own bazaars. Merchants and strangers from Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and elsewhere, live in a quarter surrounded by a wall, in order to protect their property.

8. THE CRADLE OF THE TURKS

(John Lawton, The Cradle of the Turks, in *Aramco World*, March/April 1994. Reprinted by Permission.)

To most people, the term "Turk" denotes simply an inhabitant of Turkey. Few realize that as many as 60 percent of the world's 90 million Turks – defined as anyone who speaks a Turkic language as a native

tongue - live outside the Republic of Turkey. In Central Asia, where they recently re-emerged as independent nations from a century of repression, Turkic, Azeris, Kazaks, Kirgiz, Turkomans and Uzbeks roughly equal the number of Turks in Turkey itself. There are sizable Turkic minorities too in Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Georgia, Greece, Iran, Mongolia, Russia and Ukraine. In northwest China, Uighur Turks outnumber Han Chinese.

Turkic peoples are one of the most widespread ethnic groups in the world, inhabiting a vast region from the Great Wall of China in the east to the Balkans in the west, and from Siberia in the north to Afghanistan in the south. Although Ottoman Turkey, in the beginning of this century, was dubbed the "Sick Man of Europe," the Turks have for 1500 years lived up to their name, which in Turkic means "forceful" or "strong."

The origin of the Turks, like that of nearly all Central Asian peoples, is shrouded in mystery and legend. The story preserved in Chinese annals is that they are the offspring of wolves. The ancient Turks clearly subscribed to this legend, for five days' drive from Jargalant we saw atop a large stone carving of a wolf suckling a boy. Throughout history, the wolf has remained an evocative symbol of renewal for the Turks. In the 13th century when Suleyman Shah led the drought-stricken Osmanh Turks out of Central Asia to found an empire which ultimately included the Balkans, North Africa, and the Middle East, he carried a banner displaying a wolf's head. Centuries later, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who created modern Turkey from the ashes of World War I, was known as the legendary "Boz Kurt," or Gray Wolf.

Factual evidence of the origin of the Turks is, however, limited and opinions of contemporary researchers about their possible ancestry differ. Some say the Turks are descendants of the Hsiung-nu, whom Westerners call Huns. Others say there is little evidence connecting the Turks with the Huns.

The Turks are first mentioned in Chinese annals of the third century BC but it was not until the sixth century of our era that they became a force to be reckoned with. Their home, according to the Chinese, was in the Altay mountain range in western Mongolia. In these mountains, the Turks mined iron and served as blacksmiths to their overlords, a people called the Juan-juan.

Mounted bowmen were the formidable and very mobile force of the Turkic armies. The middle of the first millennium saw the first widespread use of the rigid saddle with stirrups. Accurate shooting on the run became possible for the first time when a rider could stand in his stirrups, absorbing with his bent knees the jounce of his galloping speed. All later types of saddle can be traced to the ancient Turkic type, while archery remains, after riding and wrestling, one of the most popular sports of the steppe.

The Turks were the first steppe people to realize the importance of trade. They offered security to caravans and concluded treaties with the Sassanids and Byzantines, protecting commerce along the Silk Roads – the network of caravan trails which linked East and West across Central Asia.

Though the origins of the Turks themselves remain unresolved, the history of their earliest empire is well-documented, for the Turks left written records – a development without precedent in the history of Central Asia. Enough records have survived to permit an examination of the harsh and turbulent life of the medieval steppe lands.

Their script known as "runic Turkic" because of its resemblances to the script of the Germanic tribes, came into use during the later years of the Turkic empire. The most significant texts to survive are early eight-century inscriptions on stone stelae in family necropolises of the Altay Turks in the Orhon region of Central Mongolia. They summarized the history of the Turkic empire from its foundation in 522 until shortly before its collapse some 200 years later.

The Orhon descriptions establish that the Turks had a fully developed consciousness of their own history.

The Eastern Turkic khaganate, weakened by a long period of decadence and internecine wars, came

under the dominance of the Chinese Sui dynasty and from 630 to 682 lost its independence. Writing more than a century after the events, the unknown author of the Orhon inscriptions gave a moving and perceptive account of the times of decadence and servitude:

> Weeping and lamenting came from where the sun rises; the strong peoples of the desert came, lamenting and weeping, for these had really been valiant khagans.
>
> After that their younger brothers became khagans, their sons became khagans. But the younger brothers were unlike their elder brothers, the sons were unlike their fathers.
>
> Unwise khagans, weak khagans ascended the throne, and their officers were also unwise and weak..
>
> And because of the iniquity of the nobility and of the people, because of Chinese guile, because the elder brothers and the younger brothers were plotting against each other, because of the quarrel of those who favored the nobles and those who favored the people, the Turkic people brought about the dissolution of the empire that had been its empire, and ruined the khagan who had been its khagan. The sons of the nobles became the slaves of the Chinese peoples, their pure daughters became its servants. The noble Turks abandoned their Turkic titles and, assuming Chinese titles, they submitted to the Chinese khagan.
>
> But the small people, in its entirety, thus said, "We were a people that had its own empire. Where is now our empire? We were a people that had its own khagan. Where is now our khagan?"
>
> And thus speaking they became the enemy of the Chinese.

The Uighur rising marked the end of unity among the Turkic tribes of Central Asia. From that point on, the larger tribal coalitions either created kingdoms of their own in Central Asia or migrated to the Russian steppe and the Middle East. The collapse of the Turkic empire marked the beginning of a long period of instability on the steppe that did not end until the rise of the Mongol Empire in the 12th century. The principal Turkic states created in Central Asia during this period were those of the Qarakhanids, the Khwarizm-Shahs and the Seljuqs. All abandoned the nomadic life and adopted Islam. Even today, the Turks' most important cultural link, along with history and language, is Islam. With the exception of the Yakut of eastern Siberia and the Chuvash of the Volga region of Russia, the Turks are all Muslim.

Not only did the Turks of Central Asia embrace Islam, they became its new cutting edge. By the end of the first millennium, the military manpower and fighting skills of the steppe nomads played much the same role as those of the desert Bedouin during Islam's first extraordinary period of expansion throughout the Middle East. Turkic raids into India, beginning in the year 1000, led within two centuries to the establishment of Muslim control over the northern plains. Expansion continued off and on until, by the end of the 17th century, the whole of India was ruled by Muslims.

Meanwhile, on the western flank of Islam, the Seljuq turks scored a landmark victory over the Byzantines at Malazgirt in 1071, confirming their occupation of the grasslands of Anatolia. Thus, modern Turkey became Turkish for the first time.

9. WHO ARE THE KAZAKHS?

(Reprinted from *The Kazakhs (2nd edition)*,by Martha Brill Olcott, Richard F. Starr, with the permission of the publisher, Hoover Institution Press, Copyright 1995 by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford University.)

The following are two different versions of history behind the formation of the Ethnic Kazakh nation.

The consensus is that the Kazakh people or Kazakh nation was formed in the mid-15th century when two of the sons of the Khan of the White Horde of the Mongol empire broke away from the Khan of the Uzbeks. They moved their tribe to land formerly controlled by the Uzbeks and by the middle of the 16th c. their lands had increased to include most of the environs

of Lake Balkhash and the lands above and below the Syr Darya River and as far west as the Aral Sea. The khanate was a political confederation composed primarily of Turkic-speaking nomadic tribes of the Uzbek-Turkic stock, as well as some Uzbek tribesmen and the indigenous population. By 1523, the Kazakh nation was estimated at over one million people.

The term Kazakh came into use by the mid-16th century. Some think it came from the Turkish word *qaz* (to wander), or that it was the combined form of two Kazakh tribal names, or that it traces from the Mongol word *khasaq* (a wheeled cart used by the Kazakhs to transport their *yurts*.) There are many legends associated with the formation of the first Kazakh tribe. The most celebrated is that of Alash, whose three sons each founded one of the Kazakh hordes...the first Kazakh political party and autonomous Kazakh government was named the Alash Orda, the Horde of Alash. Yet in spite of such claims, it seems that this is just a myth with little truth in the reality of the region. Archeology is still a young science in Kazakhstan.

10. THE FORMATION OF ETHNIC KAZAKHS

(Jiger Janabel, *The Golden Horde and the Formation of the Ethnic Kazakhs*, A Doctoral dissertation, Janabel@fax.Harvard.edu. Reprinted with permission of the author.)

The formation of Kazakh Khanate in 1459, located in the southeastern corner of modern Kazakhstan, was the culmination of a long standing political, economic and ethnic evolution that began after the Mongols took over the Qipchaq steppe between 1223-1227. Although this steppe was occasionally united by various nomadic confederations prior to the Mongols' arrival, it was the Mongols who welded the vast steppe into an unprecedented degree of unity. This was accomplished through a rigid military political system and the absolute personal power of a supreme ruler.

Following the steppe tradition of land allotment, the Qipchaq steppe was reorganized by Batu Khan (d.1255), Juchi's second son, into three territorially and economically independent entities, called *ulus (es)*, each with a demarcated territory. These three *uluses*, each led by a Juchid, sometimes bowed in obedience to a stronger central authority, and at other times fought amongst themselves. As a unit, they brought profound changes into the steppe society. Nothing was more important than their direct contribution to the formation of the various Turkic speaking nationalities, including the Tatars, Nogais, Kazakhs and Uzbeks.

At the end of the 14th century the formerly centralized Golden Horde gradually slipped into a dissolution process. Simultaneously several subordinate *uluses* merged as distinct political unions, functioning in the capacity of economic guarantors for their subject tribes. Thus, tribes of each union increasingly defined their mutual relationships using political and territorial affiliations. The tendency toward an unprecedented degree of adherence within each of these large *uluses* became steady as the pressure for survival grew.

Finally, various ethnic groups emerged, thinking of themselves as nationalities. Tribes reshuffled. The Kok-orda evolved into the modern Kazakhs. Their co-tribes, originally assigned to Juchi's fifth son, were united into "the Nomadic Uzbek State" by Abulkhair Khan (1429-1468). These tribes eventually became known as the Uzbeks, named after Ozbek Khan (1313-1343) of the Golden Horde.

11. A TIMURID EMBASSY TO CHINA

(*A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art*, selected and translated by W.M. Thackston, Cambridge: The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1989, pp. 63, 247, 273, 279, 282, 287-291. Permission pending.)

Embassies were exchanged between the Timurids and Ming China on a fairly regular basis. After Timur's death, the first Chinese embassy to Shahrukh arrived in Herat in 1412. The second embassy arrived in Rabi' I (April 1417) with three hundred horsemen and gifts and presents sent by the Emperor of China consisting of falcons, brocades, velvets, silks, porcelain vessels, Chinese paper, etc. In the letter from the emperor expressing friendship for Shahrukh, he sent his gratitude to Sayyid-Ahmad Tarkhan for a white horse he had sent when the first embassy returned to Peking. A

picture of this horse, commissioned by the emperor, was sent with the embassy. When the second embassy set out for Peking in Rabi' I (May 1417), Shahrukh sent Ardashir Tovachi, who is mentioned in Ghiyathuddin's report.

Report on the Timurid Legation to the Ming Court at Peking:

A third embassy from Ming China arrived in Herat with Ardashir Tovachi in Ramadan (October 1419) and the embassy to which Ghiyathuddin Naqqash was attached seems to be a reciprocal legation, departing some two months later...

...On the 14th of Sha'ban (August 24, 1420) they came to a place from which to Sukju, the first city inside Cathay, is ten days, the whole way desert wilderness. There they encountered a group of Cathaians who had come to meet them. In one day, in a meadow that would have been the envy of the Garden of Iram, they made platforms, set up canopies, placed seats and chairs and arranged foodstuffs, goose, roast fowl, cooked viands [meals] and all types of fruit, both dried and fresh, on china platters; and there they gave a banquet that would have been difficult to hold in a great city. When they were finished eating they brought all sorts of intoxicants and gave each person the sheep, flour and barley he needed...

On the 16th of Sha'ban, Wang Daji, the ruler of the march, gave a huge banquet and summoned the emissaries, who entered his yurt. The Cathaians, as was their wont, had camped in a square, tent rope hard by tent rope, such that no creature could come among them except by the four gates they had left on the four sides of the square.

...Every day the emissaries traveled four leagues until they reached the gates of Khan Baligh (Peking). They beheld a city of inordinate magnitude, made all of stone. Because they were still in the process of building, 100,000 scaffolds were fastened to the city walls. When the emissaries reached the moat the gateway into Khan Baligh was not open, so the emissaries were taken into the city through a tower that was being worked on and brought to the gate of the Emperor's sublime palace. At the palace gate a distance of 700 feet was paved with cut stone, across which the Khurasanis passed on foot. On each side of the way were standing five elephants with their trunks held across the path along which the emissaries passed until they reached the gate of the emperor's palace. When the emissaries reached there, they saw a vast, pleasant and captivating open area, and in front of Dayming Khan's (the Emperor) pavilion they saw a platform thirty cubits in height, and atop the platforms were columns 60 cubits by 40 cubits. In front of the columns were three gateways. The middle gateway was the largest and was the emperor's passageway, the people passing through the other two. Over the pavilion behind the gateway were a *kävürgä*, a bell hung and two people waiting for the emperor to step upon the dais. Nearly three hundred thousand people gathered at the court at dawn, and two thousand singers stood by singing in Chinese in praise of the emperor in harmony, treble and bass, according to the principles of their music. Another two thousand soldiers held halberts, clubs, steel javelins, battle axes, spears, swords, and maces. Some held Chinese fans. All along the perimeter of the courtyard were chambers, balconies and columns of great magnitude. The walls of the buildings were all of jet, and the pavement was of cut stone...

...First the emperor went up and sat on the chair. He was of medium height with neither large nor small features, with two or three hundred facial hairs so long that they had been knotted into three or four plaits. On either side of the emperor's dais were seated two girls with faces like the moon and countenances like the sun, hair of ambergris knotted on top of their heads, their faces and necks exposed, and lustrous pearls in their ears. They held paper and pens in their hands and waited to write down what the emperor said in order to report when he went into the private quarters...

...Then an officer genuflected and read out the particulars of the emissaries, which were recorded on a tablet in Chinese writing. The contents of the writing was that they had traveled far and had come from Shahrukh and his sons, they had brought gifts and tribute for the emperor in order to place their foreheads in obedience

upon the ground of servitude and be encompassed by the gaze of favor and grace.

[The imperial minster then came and said to them], "First bend down and then touch your foreheads to the ground three times." The emissaries bowed and lowered their heads but did not touch their foreheads to the ground. Then they took the letters from His Majesty Shahrukh and His Highness Baysunqur and the other princes and amirs of Iran, which had been wrapped in yellow silk, as had been indicated by the Emperor's servants – it is the custom of the Chinese to wrap anything that pertains to the emperor in yellow silk... The Emperor opened the letters, looked at them and handed them back to the chamberlain.

He [the emperor] asked, "In your country is grain expensive or cheap? Is welfare for the privileged few or widespread?"

"Grain is beyond the boundaries of perfection," they replied. "And welfare is more inexpensive and more widespread then can be imagined."

"Yes," he said. "When the ruler's heart is with the Lord, the Creator bestows bountiful welfare." then he said, "I have in mind to send an emissary to Qara Yusuf and request from him some good-tempered horses, for I have heard that in his realm there are excellent horses." Then he asked, "Are the roads safe?"

The emissaries answered," Within the realm under Shahrukh Sultan's command people come and go with utter peace of mind."

"So I understand," he said. "Now you have come a long way. Arise and have some food."

The next day, the 9th Dhu'l-Hijja [December 15, 1420], the *shiqawul* (the individuals who took us to see interesting places) came at dawn with saddled horses and said to the emissaries, "Rise and mount, for the emperor is giving you a banquet." They were told to go out and relieve themselves because they would not be able to leave the banquet for a call of nature.

...After the paraphernalia was arranged, the gathering was inaugurated as mentioned before. The emperor came out and the instruments were sounded. When the emperor sat, all fell silent. Over the emperor's head to a height of ten cubits was a curtain like a canopy, of yellow silk, with four intertwined dragons painted on it. When the emperor took his place, the emissaries were taken forward and, as ordered, bowed five times. After that they returned and sat down at trays of food that had been prepared. When the Chinese honor someone they set before him three trays; less honor is two trays; and less than that is one tray. That day a thousand trays or more were set before the people. This assembly lasted from morning until noon.

TRADE AND MATERIAL EXCHANGE

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Material exchange was really only a small part of the exchanges which occurred along the silk road, although that exchange is remembered the most. Silks, furs, rugs, weaving, fabrics and other luxury goods were packed on camels and carried along vast distances. Although it was a treacherous trip and often subject to fierce and cruel bandits, the profits from the trade was so immense the exchange was considered economically vital. The merchants were daring men who reflected the diversity of the region.

1. TRADE DOCUMENT

(Jewish Travellers: A Treasury of Travelogues from 9 Centuries, by Antonio Tozer, edited by Elkan Nathan Adler, New York: Hermon Press, 1966. Used by permission of the publisher, Sepher-Hermon Press.)

In addition to silk, the Silk Road carried many other precious commodities. The China-bound caravans were laden with gold and other valuable metals, woolens and textiles, ivory, coral, amber, precious stones, asbestos and glass. Caravans leaving China bore furs, ceramics, iron, lacquer, cinnamon bark and rhubarb, and bronze objects such as belt buckles, weapons and mirrors. Many of these goods were bartered for others along the way, and objects often changed hands several times. The following text, which is a primary source trade document, is excerpted from The Book of Ways and Kingdoms, *written by Abu'l Kasim Obaidallah ibn Khordadhbeh, son of the Tabaristani, Governor in 817 AD.*

These merchants speak Arabic, Persian, Roman (i.e., Greek and Latin), the Frank, Spanish, and Slav languages. They journey from West to East, from East to West, partly on land, partly by sea. They transport from the West eunuchs, female slaves, boys, brocade, castor, marten, and other furs, and swords. They take ship from Firanja (France), on the Western Sea, and make for Farama (Pelusium). There they load their goods on camel-back and go by land to al-Kolzom (Suez), a distance of 25 farsakhs (parasangs). They embark in the East Sea (Red Sea) and sail from al-Kolzom to al-Jar (port of Medina) and Jeddah (port of Mecca), then they go to Sind, India, and China. On their return from China they carry back musk, aloes, camphor, cinnamon, and other products of the Eastern countries to al-Kolzom and bring them back to Farama, where they again embark on the Western Sea. Some make sail for Constantinople to sell their goods to the Romans; others go to the palace of the King of the Franks to place their goods. Sometimes these Jew merchants, when embarking in the land of the Franks, on the Western Sea, make for for Antioch (at the mouth of the Orontes); thence by land to al-Jabia, where they arrive after three days' march. There they embark on the Euphrates and reach Baghdad, whence they sail down the Tigris, to al-Obolla. From al-Obolla they sail for Oman, Sind, Hind, and China...

These different journeys can also be made by land. The merchants that start from Spain or France go to Sus al-Aksa (Morocco) and then to Tangier, whence they walk to Afrikia (Kairouan) and the capital of Egypt. Thence they go to ar-Ramla, visit Damascus, Al-Kufa, Baghdad, and al-Basra (Bassora), cross Ahwaz, Fars, Kirman, Sind, Hind, and arrive at China. Sometimes, also, they take the route behind Rome and, passing through the country of the Slavs, arrive at Khamlij, the capital of the Khozars. They embark on the Jorjan Sea, arrive at Balkh, betake themselves from there across the Oxus, and continue their journey toward Yurt, Toghuzghuz, and from there to China.

2. VALUE OF SILK

(Valrae Reynolds, *Buddhist Silk Textiles: Evidence for Patronage and Ritual Practice and Ritual in China and Tibet.* Permission pending)

The following trade summary tells us about the enormous amounts of silk traded to Tanguts and Jurchens in the 11th and 12th centuries. Silk was commonly measured against other merchandise, and especially horses.

In a 1044 treaty which settled border disputes between the Tanguts and the Song, the Chinese court was forced to send the Tangut state 50,000 taels of silver, 130,000 bolts of silk and 30,000 catties of tea annually in addition to significant amounts sent as

"tribute." Ten official trading posts on the border also allowed merchants to trade Tangut horses and other commodities for Song silk and other goods. In 1044, a Tangut horse was valued twenty bolts of silk, so some 400,000 bolts of silk entered the Tangut state that year alone, just at the established commercial markets. Illicit trade also flourished. Some one hundred years later, with the Jin destruction of the Northern Song (960-1127) the riches of the capital at Kaifeng, which included stories of 54 million bolts of silk and 15 million bolts of silk brocade, fell into Jurchen hands. More importantly, the extensive silk industry of northern China came under Jin control. In 1411, a peace treaty was signed, in which the Southern Song (1127-1279) court also agreed to send the Jin state 250,000 bolts of silk as annual tribute.

3. TRADING HORSES

(Edward H. Schafer, The Golden Peaches of Samarkand, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963, pp. 58-70. Copyright © 1963. Reprinted by permission)

Horses were of tremendous importance to the rulers of T'ang (7-10 century AD), whose high estate and far-flung majesty among the peoples of Asia depended in large measure on the availability of quantities of horses to carry soldiers and supplies against mobile enemies, especially the nomadic peoples, their voracious rivals. The doctrine of the final dependence of the state upon a huge number of war horses is plainly pronounced in the Book of T'ang, which states, in connection with the death of 180,000 government horses by disease, "Horses are the military preparedness of the state; if Heaven takes this preparedness away, the state will totter to a fall." The Silk Road served as a means to transport famous horses of the Central Asian Steppe to T'ang China.

...To the north were the Turkish peoples, the chief source of T'ang's horses. They supplied a versatile and cunning breed, close to the ancient *tarpan* stock, hardy for long journeys and peerless as hunters, tamed long ago by the pristine masters of the steppe, the Hsiung-nu. So important was the Turkish stock to the proud Chinese that they were obliged to humble themselves in many little ways to obtain badly needed animals. On one occasion, during the dynasty's early years, a Chinese prince demeaned himself by calling in person on the Turkish Khan in his distant camp, and was received with a display of haughty and imperious manners until the prince revealed his rich gifts (bolts of silk and jugs of wine were surely among them), at which the reception suddenly became ceremonious and warm, and a return mission was sent to the T'ang court with a herd of horses. There were other little favors which could be done for the Turks. Material gifts were not always needed to elicit the desired return of well-bred horses...

But greatest and most arrogant of the suppliers of horseflesh to the Chinese were the Uighur Turks, who dominated the horse market after the middle of the eighth century, when incessant wars, both domestic and foreign, had created an insatiable demand in the shrinking T'ang empire. The Uighurs and the Tibetans had become the chief foreign enemies of T'ang and Chinese diplomacy turned against the latter. After the Tibetans had herded off all of the thousands of Chinese horses from the government ranges in Lung-yu and even captured the capital city of Ch'ang-an, those insolent Turks, who had driven out the highlanders only to their own advantage, were deferred to in countless ways by the humiliated Chinese. Despite endless complaints about the Uighurs' haughty manners, extending even to attacks on the persons of Chinese on their own soil, the foreigners were rewarded for their services by a monopoly of the lucrative trade in horses.

Hovering dangerously on the northern edges of the Turkish lands were the Kirghiz, bane of the Uighurs in the ninth century, described as large men with pale faces, green eyes, and red hair. They managed to get their horses across hostile territory to the Chinese frontier in the last half of the seventh and first half of the eighth century. And all across Central Asia, from the Jade Gate of China to the Aral Sea, were the Western Turks and their Aryan subjects, and they too sent horses to the grand stables of T'ang.

4. THREADS OF IMAGINATION

(Antonio Tozer, *Central Asian and Chinese Silks from the 12th to the 19th Centuries*, Spink & Son Ltd., London, UK. Selections from catalogue. Reprinted with permission from the publisher Spink & Son Ltd.)

Between the 4th and the 7th centuries cosmopolitan culture flourished in China. The populations in metropolitan areas like Chang'an (Xian) and Luoyang included large numbers of traders and

settlers from all over Asia, who introduced new skills and artistic styles into China. But it was the Central Asian people from such places as Kucha and Sogdiana who made the greatest contribution. Some of the artists and skilled craftsmen were accorded high official positions and their biographies are found in the histories of the Northern Dynasties (A.D. 386-581) and the Sui (A.D. 581-618) and Tang (A.D. 618-906) Dynasties. Eventually it became evident that the Chinese fine silk production industry was influenced by foreign designs and catered to specialized markets.

Sogdiana was in a strategic location along the trade routes linking Iran and Byzantium with China. In the 8th and 9th centuries, Sogdiana was not a political entity but a loose confederation of city-states, the most important of which were Samarkand and Bukhara. There was an international diversity of silk transported along this route and these fabrics were provided by Byzantium, Syria, Egypt, Iran, central Asia and China.

Heavier silks came from Iran and Byzantium while the Chinese produced lighter fabrics. It is known there was a community of Chinese weavers living in Bukhara from the early 8th century. Some of the silks were woven further east in Central Asia where sericulture and silk weaving had been learned from the Chinese and where Sogdian influence was strong. Sogdians, the leading merchants of Central Asia colonized strategic points along the principal trade routes. Through their presence and contacts, Sogdian culture was transmitted throughout Central Asia. Not surprisingly, Sogdian silks and silks woven with Sogdian motifs have been found at Dunhuang, Turfan and Dulan. Khotan had close cultural and economic ties to Sogdiana, and Some of the deities that appear in the Buddhist art of Khotan were adopted from the Sogdian pantheon, while Sogdian texts found in Khotan document Khotan's strategic location on the trade routes connecting Sogdiana with India.

In the beginning of the 8th c., a new style began to appear in Chinese textile design – that of large floral medallions. The motif conformed to the ancient design of alternate open and closed forms were seen commonly in the arts of Egypt and the Ancient Near East, indicating again the Western derivation. With the passage of time, the patterns became more loosely structured and more naturalistic. Peonies were represented realistically and cranes could have come from contemporary paintings. By the 11th c. some of the silk patterns were a form of secularized Buddhist iconography. On the whole, the development of textile design in China from the Tang to the Liao period progressed from rigid structures bound by geometric frames to a more naturalistic pattern resembling contemporary painting.

5. WHO WERE THE WEAVERS?

(James C. Y. Watt and Anne E. Wardwell, *Central Asian and Chinese Textiles*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harry Abrams Inc., New York, 1997, pp. 21 - 27. Permission Pending.)

Some silk tapestries from Central Asia were woven by the Uyghurs who were a Turkic people originating in Mongolia. They were unique in that they synthesized influences from various sources including Sogdiana and Tang China but they particularly stood out for having characteristics which are entirely Central Asian in innovation. In one textile, the central motif was the mythical phoenix – Chinese – but the decorative style of the textile was entirely Central Asian as indicated by placing the bird among floral sprays and using brilliant color. Other motifs reflected the influence of Sassanian Iran and Sogdiana. The weavers combined designs, birds were frequently depicted in groups of two or more with their heads towards each other in the Chinese manner. The Chinese fauna served as a point of departure but the imagination of the weavers of Central Asia defines their textiles as indigenous to the region.

Other textiles were woven by the Jurchens, a people who once roamed the steppes of present day Manchuria and later settled in northern China just south of the Yellow River. Some of the designs of these people are closely related to brocades worn by officials attending the Chinese Emperor during the spring hunt.

6. THE DYE THAT BINDS

(Caroline Stone, The Dye That Binds, in *Aramco World*, September/October 1996. Permission pending.)

It never occurred to me that the bandanna might be a distant cousin of the red-and-white, black-and-white or green-and-white checked *shmagh*, or head cloth, worn almost universally by the men of the Arabian Peninsula, and widely in much of the Middle East.

It was while visiting India that I realized that these two everyday, practical cloths may both have originated with the often elaborate tie-dyed textiles of Rajasthan and Gujarat, the two states of northwestern India. There, for well over a thousand years, wool and silk, as well as the more conventional cotton, have been dyed in patterns made up of white dots on a colored ground. Scarlet predominates to this day for saris, veils and turbans. Dark blue and green, also common colors in Western bandannas, are the next favorites.

The origins of *bandhani*, as the tie-dyed process is called in Sanskrit, are obscure. The earliest written mention in Indian sources is in the *Harshacarita*, "The Deeds of Harsha," a seventh-century Sanskrit text that recounts the life of a king. There, the cloth is referred to as *pulaka bandha*, literally "dye-tie." Some scholars believe the technique may have originated in Central Asia and passed from there to India and Japan, the two countries in which the practice achieved both popularity and high levels of craftsmanship. The earliest surviving examples of *bandhani* cloth, however, as opposed to descriptions of it, date back no further than the 18th century; they are from tombs in Central Asia.

First, they lightly stamp the cloth with the design to be worked. Each traditional pattern has a name: One roundel, for example, is called *indhoni*, "the resting place of the milk pot," another is "five flowers," and a large central circle is called "full moon." A teardrop shape often used at the corners of a piece is known as "mango." Several other patterns are named after jewelry: "Forehead ornament," "drop earring" and so on. Borders may be "hooks," "waves," "flowering vine" or "peacock's feather." The small dots used to fill in spaces may be called "five grains."

The designs on fabrics the Muslim artists make for their own use are entirely geometric, in spite of the names. Those fabrics made either for non-Muslims communities or for export, however, are often covered with representational figures, such as parrots, peacocks, elephants, lions and dancers. These figures most often appear as repeated motifs in lines or circles, or worked into a checked pattern.

Making a piece of *bandhani* is complex and time-consuming, so its various stages have in some cases become family or individual specialties. It is not unusual for a fine piece to be woven in one home, tied in another, dyed in a third and finished and embroidered in a fourth.

To produce a complicated piece of *bandhani*, the pattern is laid out, and the woman – who will have grown the nails of her thumb and little finger unusually long to speed her work – bunches minute sections of the material, according to the printed cartoon, and ties each bunch with waxed cotton thread. Differently shaped knots each produce a different effect, and the knots also have their own names, such as "shell" or *jalebi*, after the square sweet. After tying, the cloth is dyed. Then, as necessary for each additional color, it is retied and re-dyed.

7. BUDDHIST SILK TEXTILES

(Valrae Reynolds, *Buddhist Silk Textiles: Evidence for Patronage and Ritual Practice and Ritual in China and Tibet.* Permission pending.)

There are extraordinary early silk textiles which in the last decade have come out of Tibet. The weaving and embroidery techniques and decorative motifs of many of these pieces have enabled scholars to expand their understanding of textile history. Preserved in Tibetan monuments, they were originally woven and decorated elsewhere.

The earlier group of textiles corresponds technically to gilt silks associated with royal garments of the Jin dynasty. Both the Liao and Jin were founded by semi-nomadic peoples, who controlled respectively the Steppes north of the Great Wall and the entire northeast of China in the tenth to early thirteenth centuries. These

northerners soon learned to covet the luxury silks traditionally produced by Chinese craftsmen. The lavish use of gold that appears in the Liao and Jin silks, on the other hand, was a new phenomenon among Chinese textiles, a response it seems to the tastes and traditions of these foreigners, who became important patrons and consumers of the luxury silk industry.

The disorganized political structure of Tibet from the eleventh to early thirteenth centuries makes it difficult to determine the status of trade there. As great religious teachers founded hundreds of temples and monasteries with the support of princely families in western, southern, central and eastern Tibet, there was a fluorescence of artistic activity to fill the new buildings with fine paintings and images. From the histories of the Buddhist clerics and princely families, it is clear that one of the popular ways to gain religious merit was to donate fine silk for the use of an esteemed teacher or Buddhist monastery.

Buddhism provided a link between Tibet and the Tangut empire, especially after envoys of the Karmage lineage visited the Tangut capital Zhongxing (now Yinchuan) in 1159 and founded a temple. These close contacts enabled some of the fine Chinese gold brocades which had arrived in the Tangut empire as tribute or trade to be taken into Tibet.

The connection between the Jin-Tangut-Tibetan interconnection can be seen in the artwork of Buddhist textiles hangings such as the fifteenth century Gyantse piece which was inspired by a group of large-scale woven and embroidered banners commissioned by the Yongle emperor as gifts for the Tibetan religious leaders. These silk banners were an early Ming period (1368-1644) continuation of the practice of sending lavish gifts from the imperial court directly to Tibet, begun by Mongol emperors in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. By the time the dynasty was founded, the Mongols had already seized control of all of the Silk Route trade across Central Asia by eliminating "middlemen" states such as the Jin and the Talgut, which they accompanied between 1209 and 1227. The Tibetans avoided a similar fate by acceding to Mongol overlordship in 1244.

The Sakya sect of Buddhism became the Mongols' surrogate in Tibet, collecting taxes and assembling troops. Mongol financial and political support for Sakya monasteries and Tibetan nobles associated with the Sakyas fostered extensive Buddhist building and artistic programs, especially in Tsang, where the Sakyas had their main establishments. Sakya hierarchs and the artists they favored, in turn, were responsible for Tibetan influence at the Mongol court at Dadu (Beijing) at the late thirteenth to fourteenth centuries.

Although the early Ming emperors repudiated most aspects of the hated Mongol rule and destroyed almost all Mongol monuments, they carefully preserved the relationship with Buddhist leaders in Tibet. Likewise, Tibetan clerics and nobles swiftly transferred their allegiance to the new Ming rulers of China. The first Ming emperor, Hongwu, was once a Buddhist monk and kept his Buddhist affinities after be became emperor.

It is not yet possible to know how many of the small corpus of extant banners and banner fragments were originally executed in the Chinese imperial workshops, to whom they were originally given or sent, or how they were used. They do tell us, however, that both embroidered and lampas-woven copies of the same cartoons were made and that the style and iconography were based wholly on Nepalo-Tibetan conventions current at both the Yuan and Ming courts, as well as the great monastic establishments of the Tsang region in Tibet. The 1410 Beijing edition of the Tibetan Kamjur includes line images of all four deities depicted in the banners - Chakrasmvara, Vajrabhairava, Raktayamari and Mahakala - which are similar in style to the textiles, although much simplified. The princes of Gyantse were allied with the dominant Sakya lineage in Tsang and had derived political power and wealth from Yuan and Ming imperial titles and gifts; in 1412 and 1413, the Prince of Gyantse also received envoys from the Yongle court. The wall paintings and clay images which fill the 75 temples and chapels inside the stupa constitute a complex pantheon reflecting the Buddhist iconography then prevalent in Tibet.

RELIGION AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE

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Historians often say that the greatest exchange is not of material goods but, instead, the exchange of ideas. These ideas are often based on philosophical belief systems and more formally defined religions. The criss-crossing of peoples also meant the intersecting and mingling of beliefs and attitudes. The religious discontents from Western Asia felt they could find havens as they moved East; peoples of the East were intrigued by the beliefs of the West and wanted to import them into their territories. What often occurred was an interesting amalgam of ideas, strongly modified by the interchanges which occurred.

1. A MELTING POT OF RELIGIONS

(Zubdatu't Tawarikh of Hafiz Abru, *A Persian Embassy to China,* translated by K.M. Maitra, New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1970, p. 12. Permission pending)

Apart from silk and other material merchandise, the Silk Road carried a more significant commodity – religion. The Silk Road constituted a formative and transformative rite of passage and no religion (or people) emerged unchanged at the end of their journey – Mahayana and Pure Land Buddhism, Nestorian, Christianity, Manichaeism, Islam, Persians, Turks, Chinese...together, with these intellectual and spiritual influences, came many new important technical and scientific influences in mathematics and linguistics. The following Account of the Coming Back of the Envoys Who Had Gone To Cathay *glances over the variety of religions encountered along their trip.*

By the end of Jumada II (July 11th) they [the envoys] arrived at Turfan. The majority of the inhabitants of this town were unbelievers and worshiped idols. They had large idol-temples of superb beauty inside which there were many idols, some of them having been made newly and others old. In the foreground of the platform there was a big image which was asserted by them to be the status of Sakyamuni.

They departed from this city on the 2nd of Rajab (July 13th) while still the weather was extremely hot and reached Qara-Khoja on the 5th of Rajab (July 16th). On the 10th of Rajab they were met by the Chinese officials who took down the names of the envoys and the members of their suite. On the 19th of Rajab they reached a place which was called Sufi Ata. One of the Sayyids of Tirmiz whose name was Akwand-zada Taju'd-Din had built an alms-house and had taken up his residence there. He was the son-in-law of Amir Fakhru'd-Din the governor of the Muslims of Qamul.

On the 21st of Rajab they reached the town of Qamul. In this town Amir Fakhru'd-Din had built a magnificent mosque, facing which they had constructed a Buddhist temple of a very huge size, inside which there was set up a large idol. On the left and right sides of which there were a considerable number of smaller idols. Just in front of the big idol there stood a copper image of a child of ten years of age of great artistic beauty and excellence. On the walls of building there were frescoes of expert workmanship and exquisite colored paintings. At the gate of the temple there were statues of two demons which seemed ready to attack one another.

On the 25th of Rajab they set out from there, after which most of he way lay across the Great Desert and they could obtain water on every alternate day or every two days, till they reached on the 12th of Sh'aban a place which was at ten days' journey from Sakchou through the desert which was the first city of the Chinese as well as their military outpost. A number of Chinese officials had come to bid welcome to the envoys under orders from the Emperor. It was a delectable meadow. All sorts of viands [meals] consisting of geese, fowls, roasted meat, fresh and dry fruits had been served up in China dishes, and set up on tables and trays. After the repast various kinds of intoxicants consisting of wines and liquors were served up and all became tipsy.

2. BUDDHISM AND THE SILK ROAD

(Richard C. Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Exchange from Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century,* New York: St. Martin's Press,1999, pp. 37-59. Permission pending)

Buddhism, another "commodity" carried by the Silk Road was to revolutionize art and thought not only

in China but throughout the entire Far East. The gentle creed of Buddhism preached compassion to all living creatures, an idea born in north-east India in the sixth century BC. King Ashoka's conversion in the third century BC had led to its adoption as the official religion of his empire which then comprised almost all of India. Buddhism first reached China, according to legend, as a result of a dream by the Han Emperor Ming-ti in the first century AD. In this he saw a golden figure floating across the room in a halo of light. Next morning he summoned his wise men and demanded an interpretation. After deliberating among themselves they decided that he must have seen the Buddha (for the new faith had already been heard of in China). An envoy was immediately dispatched to India to find out more about Buddhism and its teaching. After a long absence he returned to the Han court not only bearing sacred Buddhist texts and pictures, but also bringing with him Indian priests who had agreed to explain their religion to the Chinese emperor. Legend or not, it is certain that from about this time onwards missionaries and pilgrims began to travel between China, Central Asia and India. In addition to sacred books and texts they brought with them examples of the art of the new religion, never before seen in China, which was to astonish and delight the aesthetically conscious Chinese.

Buddhist Schools of the Silk Road

An inclusive movement which came to be known as Mahayana, or "Great Vehicle" first gained influence in Central Asian regions such as Khotan. This was not a school per se but rather a "pan-Buddhist movement" defined mainly by the acceptance of new scriptures. Mahayana probably began in northwestern India or Central Asia during the first century BC. Many of the Mahayanan texts were probably composed in Central Asia along the Silk Road. One of the distinctive themes was the elevation of the Buddha to the "supramundane," reflected in the belief that his death was a mere appearance. There was also emphasis on his compassion for the less fortunate and the idea that all human beings contain "the buddha-nature" and should aspire to nothing less than full buddhahood. One who embarked upon this quest toward becoming a buddha was known as a *Bodhisattva*, someone who can be defined as vowing to be reborn as many times as it takes to work toward becoming a full buddha. Eventually Mahayana began to refer negatively to the traditional schools as *Hinayana*, the "Lesser Vehicle."

The Gandhara Synthesis and the Kushans

By around 130 BC Greek rule in Bactria made way to nomadic conquests by other steppe people and the Kushans arose in what is now northwestern Pakistan. The origins of the Kushans is not entirely clear although it appears they were an ethnically mixed group consisting partly of Indo-European immigrants from further east along the Silk Road, a people known to the Chinese as the Yüeh-chih. The Kushans came to control the trade routes connecting the Indian subcontinent with the Silk Road to the northwest. It is in the Kushan period that the Buddha is first depicted in human form, a development which some scholars attribute to Greek influence. Chinese Buddhist source states that the Kushan lands were one of the main centers of Buddhism. Sogdiana does not appear ever to have experienced widespread conversion to Buddhism, however. Buddhist missionaries probably reached Khotan on the southern loop of the Silk Road sometimes in the 1st c. Khotan was inhabited by Iranian speaking people. The people of Kucha north of the desert spoke a language closer to Celtic. Buddhist paintings found in Kucha are derived from the Gandharan style. The light complexioned figures are distinctly Europoid, often blue-eyed.

The Arrival of Buddhism into China

The first clear mention of Buddhism in a Chinese source is a reference in the *Hou Han shu* (Late Han History) to a Buddhist community at the court of the governor of Ch'u Province.The first Buddhist missionary who is named in the Chinese sources is a Parthian monk who arrived in Lo-yang in 148. This monk may have been the first to organize the systematic translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese. The oasis town of Kucha on the northern branch of the Silk Road was another Buddhist center from which missionaries traveled to China. The abundance of Buddhist remains from the area around Marv (Merv) dating to as early as the 1st c.

AD as well as the linguistic evidence showing the evolution of Buddhist terminology via Parthian demonstrate that Buddhism traveled first northwest out of the subcontinent into the Iranian world and then eastward along the Silk Road. And once Buddhist presence was established in China, the Silk Road offered a natural conduit by which Chinese Buddhist influences could later travel westward again through Central Asia. The idea of translating Buddhist texts into local vernaculars appears to have come to Central Asians from the Chinese; prior to the 6th c., when Buddhist texts were first translated into their own vernaculars, Central Asians were apparently content to read them in Indian languages.

The Buddhist faith gave birth to a number of different sects in Central Asia. Of these, The "pure land" and "Chan" (Zen) sects were particularly strong, and were taken beyond China; they are both still flourishing in Japan.

3. A BUDDHIST PILGRIM ON THE SILK ROAD

(Sally Hovey Wriggins, *XuanZang: A Buddhist Pilgrim on the Silk Road,* foreword by Frederick W. Mote, Westview Press, 1996 , pp. 10-12; 22-27; 177-180. Permission pending.)

Xuanzang was a curious boy and an exceptional student who questioned books and his master's teachings. He wanted to become a monk and was determined to travel to the Western world to ask about doubtful passages. He hoped that in India he would find teachers who would be able to resolve his perplexities. One of his main aims was to secure a Sanskrit copy of Yoga Sastra , a compendium of Idealist philosophy of which only parts had reached China. The school taught that "the Outside does not exist, but that the Inside does. All things are mental activities only."

Preparing Himself in Chang'an

Xuanzang continued his Buddhist studies in Chang'an and sought out those foreigners who could give him instruction in the languages spoken beyond China's borders. The Western Market, the area of the city connected with the Silk Road, offered Xuanzang an opportunity to learn some Tokharian, which was spoken in many places in Cental Asia, like Turfan. His gift in languages would serve him well in the future. He also began to study Sanskrit in 626 C.E. so that he would be able to communicate with foreign monks. Like Latin in the Christian monasteries of medieval Europe, Sanskrit was the language of Buddhist scriptures and monasteries in all of northern Asia.

Xuanzang had spent fifteen years in Luoyang, Chengdu, and Chang'an, studying languages and mastering the teachings of the various schools of Buddhism. In so doing he formed serious doubts about some of the Chinese translations. He wondered which precepts were authenitc? Was it true that all men or only part of humanity could attain Buddahood? Thus he made up his mind to go to India to clear up his doubts and to bring back the complete Sanskrit text of what came to be called *Treatise on the Stages of Yoga Practice*, by Asanga.

Xuanzang was drawn to the sophisticated writings of Asanga and his brother Vasubanhu, who were the founders of the Yogacarea school of Buddhism, only part of whose huge compendium of philosophy had reached China. This school of thought professed a metaphysical idealism in which the outside world did not exist but was a projection of one's own consciousness. The following verse from the Diamond Sutra tells us that the material world is an illusion.

> As Stars, a fault of vision, as a lamp,
> A mock show, dew drops, or a bubble,
> A dream, a lightning flash, or cloud,
> So should one view " the world of birth and death," or Samara.

With a firm sense of truths only dimly perceived, he knew that he must plumb to the source. Xuanzang, along with several other monks, sent a petition to Emperor Taxiing to be allowed to leave China. Xuanzang's petition was not answered, but an imperial decree made it clear that laymen and possibly monks, unless they had official business, had better stay home. This hardly deterred Xuanzang.

> 6.29 C.E. The month is uncertain. Dangers and untold difficulties lie ahead of him. He retires into the seclusion of a sacred tower in Chang'an in

order to pray for guidance. He has a dream. In it he sees Mount Sumeru, a sacred mountain at the center of the universe, made of gold, silver, beryl, and crystal, surrounded by a Great Sea. Lotus flowers of stone support him as he crosses the waters, but so slippery and steep is the way up this Asian Mount Olympus that each time he tries to climb its sides he slides to the bottom. Of a sudden, a mighty whirlwind raises him to the summit; the world stretches out as far as the eye can see. The pilgrim beholds an unending horizon, a symbol of the countless lands he hopes to visit. In an ecstasy of joy he awakes; he has been shown a vision of what he must do. He now knows that it is meant for him to go. He will be severely tested, but he is ready to depart.

Beginning His Journey

Due to untimely frosts, the harvests had failed. A decree was issued ordering both monks and laymen to disperse to parts of China that were less affected. Xuanzang took advantage of the decree. He traveled with several companions from Chang'an to the high valleys and gorges of Gansu, one the westernmost Chinese provinces. He was 27 years old when he began his journey.

The impetuous king of Turfan[1], having heard of Xuanzang's approach, ordered an escort to meet him. A powerful monarch of Chinese descent, the king had sent rare gifts to the Tang emperor and also presented himself in person at the Chinese court.

Opposing the King of Turfan

Since the king of Turfan was also a devout Buddhist, Xuanzang could hardly refuse to see him. The moment the king was informed of Xuanzang's arrival, he left his palace and proceeded by torchlight to meet him. The queen and all her serving women came to pay their respects, and food was served. Then the king, according to Huili, persisted in talking with him all night.

630 c.e. The hour grows late. Having stayed for ten days, the Master desires to take his leave and continue his journey. But the king wants him to stay and be a spiritual preceptor for his kingdom. Xuanzang says: "It needs no repeated explanation to understand your deep kindness. But as I am going to the east to seek the Law of the Bkudha, it is improper for me to stop halfway before I have found it."
The King is adamant.
Xuanzang is firm.
The king becomes sullen and shouts at the pilgrim, flapping the sleeves of his royal robe, " I have other ways to deal with you." He threatens to detain him by force or else send him back to his country.
It is Xuanzang's first confrontation with royal authority and power. There will be other times when he will have to resist a monarch's wish, even that of the emperor himself. He stands firm. Still the king does not let him go, increasing his offering. Xuanzang decides that he must refuse to eat and drink. The king serves him with his own hands. For three days Xuanzang fasts, hoping to change the king's mind. On the fourth day the Master's breath is very feeble. The king is ashamed and gives in.

In the end, Xuanzang promised to preach to his subjects in Turfan for a month. He also agreed to stop in Turfan for three years on his return journey to China[2].

After Xuanzang's month-long sojourn in this oasis, the king equipped him in truly grand style for his pilgrimage. He had various articles of clothing made suitable for such a climate, such as face-coverings, gloves and leather boots. Moreover he gave him a hundred gold ounces, and three myriads of silver pieces, with five hundred rolls of satin and taffeta, enough for the outward and home journey of the Master during twenty years. He gave him also thirty horses and twenty-four servants.

[1] Some time later, he associated himself with the Turkish nomads and cut off the caravans between China and the western kingdoms. It is said that he died of fright as he awaited the arrival of the Chinese armies. In 640 C.E. Turfan was annexed to China.

[2] This was not to happen, for the king's death released the pilgrim from the promise, and Xuanzang returned to China fifteen years later on the Southern Silk Road.

The gold, silver, satin and taffeta would be for the kings and khans whom he would visit on his journey. Most important of all, the king gave him twenty different kingdoms. The Turfan king requested these rulers to conduct Xuanzang through their territories and to provide relays of horses. And finally, the king commissioned one of his officers to conduct Xuanzang to the Great Khan of the Western Turks.

In his letter to the Great Khan, the king of Turfan asked him to be kind to Xuanzang, as he had been "to the slave who writes these respectful lines." The relation of the two monarchs was clear. The king of Turfan was a vassal of the Khan and had a right to claim protection for his new friend – a medieval code that seemed to apply in Asia as it had in Europe.

> For all these favors, I feel ashamed of myself and do not know how to express my gratitude. Even the overflow of the Chiao River is not comparable with the amount of your kindness, and your favor is weightier than the mountains of the Pamir Range. Now I have no more worry to travel across the suspending bridge over the perilous Icy River, and it is now time to visit the Land of the heavenly Ladder and the Bodhi tree. If I may achieve my objective, to whom shall I owe my achievement? To nothing but the king's favor.

Xuanzang was more right than he knew, for the empire of the Western Turks at the time extended from the Altai Mountains in the former soviet Russia to what is now Afghanistan and Pakistan. This protection extended even further, for the monarch who ruled from Kunduz in present-day Afghanistan was both the Khan's son and the king of Turfan's son-in-law. The monk who had left China secretly with a warrant on his head would now have official standing; all the petty kings of the desert oases, all the rulers of the Western Turks, were at his service.

From Turfan, the pilgrim and his now large caravan raveled towards the oasis of Karashahr. On the way his party was confronted by robber band; Xuanzang's entourage was able to bribe the bandits to withdraw. The caravan ahead, had been not so lucky. After these dangers, Xuanzang reached the remarkable, prosperous kingdom of Karashahr. At one time the number of grottoes that were transformed into Buddhist sanctuaries in the area ws so great that the word Mingoi, meaning "I,000 caves," was used to describe the region and came to be used elsewhere. According to Xuanzang's account, there were ten monasteries containing nearly two thousand Hinayana Buddhist monks.

Visiting the Monasteries at Kucha (Kuqa)

From Karashahr, Xuanzang followed the historical route running along the foot of the Tian Shan Mountains. Like the king of Turfan before him, the Kucha monarch went out to meet the young pilgrim, accompanied by the chief officers of the court and the monks of the district. The king of Kucha[3] was a devout Buddhist and at the time anxious to win the favor of the Chinese, so it was natural that he should give Xuanzang a warm welcome.

Unlike the king of Turfan, the king of Kucha was not of Chinese descent, nor was his appearance Chinese. He had red hair and blue eyes. He seems also to have been without the fiery temper of the Turfan king. The elegant royal pair who greeted the Chinese pilgrim were representative of an Indo-European people in race and appearance. Xuanzang described the king as a man of weak intellect who was controlled by his ministers.

Kucha was perhaps the most important kingdom in Cental Asia. Xuanzang was impressed with its wealth and the brilliance of its civilization as well as its great size. This country yielded millet, wheat, rice, grapes, pomegranates, and plenty of pears, plums, peaches, and apricots. It produced also gold, copper,

[3]Shortly after the pilgrim's visit in 630 C.E., the king sent the Tang emperor a tribute of horses and received in return an imperial warrant of investiture. Later the same ruler showed his lack of political wisdom in renouncing Chinese suzerainty in favor of an alliance with Turks. In 638 C.E. the Chinese invaded his country and took him prisoner.

iron, lead, and tin: its climate was temperate and the people had honest ways; their writing was taken from that of India, but has been much altered; they had great skill with wind and stringed musical instruments.

Being Interviewed by the Emperor

Xuanzang had two interviews with the emperor in the Palace of the Phoenix at Luoyang, the second imperial capital. Their second meeting was well documented.

> Having sat down the emperor asked: "Why did you go [to India] without telling me?"
>
> The Master replied with apology. "When I was preparing for my journey, I had sent petitions to Your Majesty several times, but as my project was un worthy, I did not enjoy the favor of being granted with an official permission. Because of my utmost sincerity for seeking the Law, I went away privately for which offence I beg the pardon of Your Majesty."
>
> The emperor said: " Since you are a monk, you are different from lay people in this matter. I am delighted that you went to seek for the Law at the risk of your life for the benefit of all the people. There is no need to ask my pardon."

When the emperor showed astonishment that he had been able to make such a journey, Xuanzang replied in the language of diplomacy that it was the universal prestige of the new dynasty that had made it possible.

> I have heard that it is not far to reach the Heavenly Lake for those who could ride on a speedy wind, and it is not difficult to cross a stormy river, if one sailed in a dragon-boat. Since Your Majesty ascended the throne to rule over the country, your virtue and benevolence prevailed in all the areas, with the wind of morality blowing to the hot countries in the south and your political influence reaching as far as beyond the Pamirs.

Here Xuanzang was acknowledging the notable foreign policy success of the emperor. The emperor found Xuanzang full of clear information on the climate, products, rulers, customs, and history of the peoples of Cental Asia and India. The emperor suggested that he write a book. "These Buddhist kingdoms," said the emperor at last, " are so far off that up until no our history books have given us very imperfect accounts of the sacred sits and the religious teachings. As you have recently seen it all for yourself, you ought to write a book containing this new information." [4]

That same emperor, realizing that Xuanzang was a man of great talent who could be useful, exhorted him to become his adviser on Asian relations. Xuanzang explained that he had become a monk at an early age and had been totally absorbed in Buddhist studies: "If your Majesty orders me to return to secular life, it would be like dragging a boat from the water to the land." The emperor protested: "I have not yet said all I wish to say in our hasty conversation. I wish you to go with me to the East on my political inspection, so that I may talk with you beside my work of commanding the troops. What do you think of it?"

Xuanzang protested that he would add nothing to the campaign and furthermore that monastic rules stated that a monk was forbidden to watch a military campaign: "Since this is the teaching of the Buddha, I must report it to Your Majesty. It will be good fortune for me if your Majesty will have compassion on me." The emperor took him at his word and dropped the subject.

Writing the Record of the Western Regions

Xuanzang lost no time in beginning his book, *Record of the Western Regions*, which took a year to write and was completed in 646 C.E. He had brought back with him a mass of papers consisting patly of accounts of his own experiences and impersonal records of various kingdoms in India and elsewhere. Xuanzang's records today have become a major source for historians studying the India of the seventh century before the coming of Islam.

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[4]This was an unusual comment from an emperor who is usually portrayed as being anti-Buddhist because of the powerful influence of one of his Confucian advisers.

The Death of the Emperor

Xuanzang continued to work diligently on his translations with an expert board of translators provided by the emperor. Whenever possible Xuanzang used his prestige to strengthen the position of Buddhism in Tang China. The emperor asked him a second time to be one of his advisers. Xuanzang again declined. This seemed to be a turning point, for the emperor suddenly expressed his regret that his preoccupation with political and military affairs and deprived him of a chance to study Buddhism in detail. He went further: He proclaimed Buddhism as superior to Confucianism, Daoism, and other philosophies. In the last year of the emperor's life, at a time when his health was failing, he sought out Xuanzang as his spiritual guide.

4. WHO WERE THE KHAZARS?

(Golden, P.B. Khazaria and Judaism, in *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi 3*,1983 pp. 127-156, NYPL: JFL 77-88, pp.136-137. Permission pending.)

The Khazars were nomadic and semi-nomadic shamanist people, and played a crucial role in the Eurasian political community. They gained their independence from Turkish domination in the 7th century and eventually become a barrier between the Islamic Empire and Christendom of Western Europe. As such, the Khazars were allies of the Byzantine Empire. According to a Hebrew source, the *Causer*, the Khazars converted to Judaism in 740 A.D. Why did the Khazars convert to Judaism? – The motivation for the Khazar conversion, other than the religious visions of the Qagan is nowhere explicitly stated. Undoubtedly, as occurred with other nomadic formations brought into close contact with great sedentary societies, a need was perceived by the Khazar ruling elite to have a religion more appropriate to and expressive of their imperial status. Such a faith would also have to be acceptable to their neighbors within the context of the latter's religious development. Another factor operative in the conversion was, presumably, the implied association of a monotheistic faith with the process of political centralization. It is also probable that the shamanistic practices and in particular the authority of the shaman, all of which had their origins in the pre-pastoral nomadic stages of the development of the Altaic peoples, were undergoing a steady decline. Judaism could be used to further enhance monarchic power and at the same time place Khazaria on a par with the great empires of the Mediterranean basin. Indeed, entrance into this "club" of great powers required adherence to one of the recognized monotheistic faiths. The following are views on the Khazar's conversion as presented by medieval historians.

5. THE KHAZAR KINGDOM"S CONVERSION TO JUDAISM

(Omeljan Pritsak, The Khazar Kingdom's Conversion to Judaism, in *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol II: 3, September 1978. Reprinted with the permission of the Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University.)

Judah Halevi (1075-1141) viewed the Khazar conversion as a central event in Jewish history. Halevi, undoubtedly the foremost Jewish poet and thinker of the Middle Ages, was born and raised in Andaluain. Writing during the revival of Jewish Messianism and apocalyptic hopes, Halevi made the proselytic Khazar king the central hero of his dialogue, and thus elevated the Khazar conversion from a marginal happening in Jewish history to a major event. The following is a passage from Halevi's Kuzari:

> I was asked to state what arguments and replies I could bring to bear against the attack of philosophers and followers of other religions, and also against [Jewish] sectarians who attacked the rest of Israel. This reminded me of something I had once heard concerning the arguments of a Rabbi who sojourned with the king of the Khazars. The latter, as we know from historical records, became a convert to Judaism about four hundred years ago. To him came a dream, and it appeared as if an angel addressed him saying: "Thy way of thinking is indeed pleasing to the Creator, but to thy way of acting." Yet he was so zealous in the performance of the Khazar religion, that he devoted himself with a perfect heart to the service of the temple and sacrifices. Notwithstanding this devotion, the angel came again at night and repeated: "Thy way of thinking is pleasing to God, but not thy way of acting." This caused him to ponder over the different beliefs and religions and finally [he] became a convert to Judaism together with many other Khazars.

The following passage was written by Muslim Spaniard al-Bakri AH 487/ AD 1094:

> The reason for the conversion of the king of the Khazars, who had previously been a heathen to Judaism was as follows. He had adopted Christianity. Then he recognized the wrongness of his belief and began to speak with one of his governors about the concern with which he was filled. The other said to him: "Oh King, the People of the Book form three classes. Invite them and inquire of them, then follow whichever is in possession of the truth." So he sent to the Christians for a bishop. Now there was with him a Jew, skilled in debate, who disputed with the bishop, asking him: "What do you say about Moses, son of Amram, and the Torah which was revealed to him?" The other replied: "Moses is a prophet, and the Torah is true." Then said the Jew to the king: "He has admitted the truth of my creed. Ask him now what he believes." So the king asked him and he replied: "I say that the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, is the Word, and that he has made known the mysteries in the name of God." Then the Jew said to the king of the Khazars: "He confesses a doctrine which I know not, while he admits what I set forth." But the bishop was not strong in bringing proofs. So he invited the Muslims and they sent him a learned and intelligent man who understood disputation. But the Jew hired someone against him who poisoned him on the way, so that he died. And the Jew was able to win the king for his religion.

6. JEWISH GROUPS IN MODERN CENTRAL ASIA

(Facing West: Oriental Jews of Central Asia and the Caucasus, edited by Hetty Berg, Zwolle: Waanders Publisher, 1997, pp. 35- 63. Permission pending)

Bukharan Jews are a sub-ethnic Jewish group, residing mostly in Central Asia, in the towns of Uzbekistan and the adjacent republics, as well as in Russia, Israel and the United States. The name comes from the Bukharan Emirate, a former feudal Muslim state in the territory of today's Uzbekistan and named after the capital, the city of Bukhara. The Bukharan Jews speak Judeo-Tajic, a language related to Persian.

No definitive statistics are available on the Bukharan Jews. In the mid-nineteenth century, Bukharan Jews in Central Asia numbered around 10,000. The population increased to c. 16,000 at the turn of the twentieth century and to 20,000 in the 1910s. In the 1970s, the population of c. 30,000 Bukharan Jews in Central Asia remained stable because of the high birth rate. However, in the past decade, massive emigration by Bukharan Jews to Israel and the United States has considerably decreased the numbers living in their homeland. The largest communities of Bukharan Jews in Uzbekistan are located in Samarkand, Tashkent (capital of Uzbekistan), Bukhara, as well as in the cities of the Fergana Valley, in Tajikistan and Kirgistan.

Jews are known to have lived in Central Asia since the Achaemenid period in Iran. But both Bukhara and Afghani Jews drifted away from the overall Jewish population of Khorasan (Eastern Iran) rather late, in the 16th century, and continued until the 18th. Bukharan Jews therefore represent one of the most recent sub-ethnic groups of all the Jewish communities.

Dwellings and lifestyle

In the sixteenth century the first Jewish quarter, known as the Old *Mahalla*, was founded. In 1843 the Bukharan Emir sold the Jews a plot of land in Samarkand for a new Jewish quarter. This quarter, now called Vostok, still exists today, and is the largest traditional Jewish quarter remaining in Central Asia.

A Jewish *mahalla* (quarter) is an integral part of many cities in Central Asia. In addition to those in Bukhara (where three adjacent quarters date back to the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries) and Samarkand, *mahallas* still exist in Shakhrisabz, Kattakurgan, Karmana, Kokand and Margilan.

In conservative societies small ethnic groups normally monopolize certain trades. Thus, Bukharan Jews are primarily involved in two trades: dyeing cloth (in the nineteenth century Jews were identified by their indigo-stained hands) and music.

Bukharan Jews tend to follow all the life cycle rituals of circumcision, weddings and funerals. Observance of other religious rituals depends largely on the city, whether there is a Jewish quarter, and whether the individual concerned lives in the *mahalla* or in a modern

apartment complex. Nevertheless, Bukharan Jews are generally involved in religious activities. Most Jewish communities – even fairly small ones – have prayer services in the synagogue every morning.

Bukharan Jews differ little from Muslims in Central Asia. In fact, the main difference between a traditional Muslim house and one owned by a Bukharan Jews is that the dwellings occupied by Jews do not have separate sections for men and women. Many of the interiors of Jewish homes are masterpieces of Oriental art, where walls and ceilings are decorated with wood carvings and *gunch*, colorful paintings and quotations from the Bible. Bukharan synagogues are no different from Jewish residences. Located in the heart of the Jewish quarter, most Bukharan synagogues are homes converted for this purpose in the twentieth century.

An interesting group of household utensils are the children's items: cradle linen, covers and amulets for children. An amulet made of a strip of black cloth would be attached to the crib. For boys, the circumcised foreskin would be sewn into one of the strips. In Caucasian tradition, the detached foreskin provided protection, often being buried beneath the threshold of the house or thrown onto the roof beam.

The other amulet is like an envelope of colorful triangular pieces of cloth sewn together, with a button in the center. Mothers believed that it would protect sons against epilepsy. A satin amulet shaped like a tobacco pouch with a cover contains a scrap of paper with Arabic and Hebrew letters. This type of amulet would be attached to the child's back.

Prohibitions

Before the Russian conquest, Central Asian Jews had endured a series of 21 prohibitions known as the Omar Conditions. These had been introduced to divide Jews from the Muslim population, to limit their freedom of movement, and to encourage them to convert to Islam. The restrictions affected trade, public conduct, property rights and the clothes that could be worn, specifically gowns, belts and hats. One of the first Europeans to visit Bukhara wrote in 1832 that "Jews were not allowed to trim their gowns with silk." (i.e., with silk ribbon or fringes) Other scholars mentioned that "Jews are not allowed to wear gowns of bright or multiple colors... just the black or brown *alacha* gowns." (i.e. made of handmade cotton cloth). Jews "could not come to the market" without dark undecorated outer gowns.

Belts formed an integral part of a man's clothing in Central Asia. Some were made of leather, some of a square cloth, diagonally folded, or of scarves of various fabrics. Bukharan Jews were forced to wear a rough horsehair rope, placed just below the chest, "and so that they would not conceal this so-called 'sign of distinction,' they were strictly forbidden to wear a non-belted gown over a belted one." While some Jews managed to buy permission to replace the rope with a leather belt, cloth belts remained the prerogative of Muslims.

Restrictions on headgear were particularly severe. It was a capital offense for a Jew to wear a turban. Jews had to wear "a square cap of lustrine or glued calico, always black and trimmed with lambskin." A cap of this type was acquired for the St. Petersburg collection in 1926, revealing the persistence of the custom.

With the establishment of the Turkestan governorship, Jews acquired equal rights with Muslims, and all the humiliating prohibitions and restrictions were lifted, including the dress restrictions. These survived only in the Bukharan Emirate, which remained an independent state under Russia protection. While the gown, belt and hat of the costume discussed here must have been worn by a Jew from Russian Turkestan: the details of the gowns and skull cap place the costume in Samarkand.

7. GNOSIS ON THE SILK ROAD

(Klimkeit, Hans-Joachim. *Gnosis on the Silk Road: Gnostic Texts from Central Asia*, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993. p. 87, 235. Copyright © 1993 by Hans-J. Klimkeit. Reprinted by permission of Harper-Collins Publishers, Inc.)

In the eighth to tenth century, one other group of Turkic peoples converted to a new religion based on the revelation of divine truth: the Uighurs in Mongolia converted to Manichaeism in 763.

Mani was born in the year 216 AD to parents of royal Parthian ancestry and raised in an ascetic religious environment. After having two revelations he became a prophet and set out to preach his message. Buddhist influences were significant in the formation of his religious beliefs. The transmigration of souls became a Manichaean belief as well as the structure of the community with male and female monks (the elect) with lay followers (the hearers). Mani's message was attractive to so many people because he made every effort "to speak their language," borrowing ideas, symbols and religious terminology from every tradition in existence.

The system blends Semitic and Iranian traditions so completely that scholars often have difficulty determining the underlying source. It is generally regarded as a gnostic system with a dualistic view of the universe in which "good" is equated with spirit and "evil" with matter. The universe is seen as a realm of struggle between good and evil, with the good, represented as particles of light, striving to be liberated from the evil matter in which it is trapped. The most visible figure in Manichaean mythology is Jesus – Jesus the Man, Jesus the Living Soul and Jesus the Splendor.

The Sogdians played a major role in the transmission of the faith with their capital, Samarkand, becoming the center of the early and active Manichaean community. For about 77 years, from 763 to 840 AD, the faith did enjoy the status of an official, state-sponsored religion among the Uighur Turks. The Uighurs tried to use their leverage in the T'ang court to protect Manichaean communities in China but it was unsuccessful, because the T'ang rulers looked on Manichaeism with suspicion.

In Central Asia some of the subject population became Manichaean, some remained Nestorian and many others accepted Mahayana Buddhism. The texts and paintings from the Turfan oasis showing a mixing of the three traditions that often verges on the bizarre. There is a mixing of terms and vocabulary, interchanging Christian and Buddhist terms. Some of the mixing of religious ideas was even carried back west along the Silk Road to Europe. In China there is also evidence of conceptual sycretism. The famous ten-foot-high 8th C. Nestorian monument in Xian is topped by a Maltese cross resting on a Taoist cloud with a Buddhist lotus flower beneath it. The text inscribed below summarizes the essence of Christianity in heavily Buddhist-flavored terms and images (e.g. "The eight cardinal virtues," echoing the Noble Eightfold Path, etc.)

To ordinary people this religious mish-mash often must have been quite confusing. One Chinese text offers the following advise: "Talking about accepting Buddha, one should think of converting to *which* Buddha; not Mani Buddha, not to Nestorian Buddha, nor Zoroastrian Buddha, but Sakyamuni Buddha..."

Commemorative hymn for Mar Zaku

Mar Zaku, one of the first generation of Mani's disciples, accompanied the master at his last public appearance at Ctesiphone. We know him as the recipient of a letter from Mani. This hymn in Mar Zaku's memory must have been written shortly after he died (ca. 300 AD) It is one of the outstanding examples of Parthian poetry. In spite of its early date, it contains Indian Buddhist loanwords.

Oh great Teacher, Mar Zaku,... Shepherd!
Oh great Lamp that was so suddenly extinguished!
Our eyes were darkened, made faint and weak.
Oh battle-seeking Hero who left (his) army behind;
Terror seized the troop, the army was thrown into confusion.
Oh great Tree whose height was felled!
The birds started to quiver; their nest had been destroyed.
Oh great Sun that sank below the earth!
Our eyes saw only darkness, for the light was veiled.
Oh zealous Caravan leader who left his caravan behind
In deserts, wastes, mountains and gorges!
Oh Heart and Soul that have departed from us!
We need your skill, your reason and your glory.
Oh living Sea that has dried up!
The course of the rivers is obstructed and they no longer flow.
Oh green Mountain on which sheep graze!
The milk for the lambs run dry, the sheep bleat pitifully.
Oh mighty Father, for whom many sons mourn,
All the children that have been orphaned.
Oh Lord who was spared no pains, who endured want!
You cared for the well-being of the house of God in every

way.
Oh great Spring, whose source is stopped up!
Sweet nourishment is held back from our mouths.
Oh bright Lamp whose radiant light shone into another world!
Darkness befell us.
Oh Mar Zaku, Shepherd, blessed Teacher!
Our power is now separated from you.
No longer do we look into your bright eyes;
No longer do we hear your sweet words.
Oh God Sroshav with the sweet name, bright Lord!
None is like to you among all the gods.
We sigh and weep bitterly, we are grieved,
We constantly remember your love.
You were exalted in all the lands,
The kings and the great ones honored you.
Lovely and kind (was your) nature, mild (was) you speech
That never succumbed to bitter wrath.
Oh great, strong Giant who displayed great patience!
You tolerated everyone, you were renowned.
Oh righteous Father, meek and merciful,
Magnanimous and generous, compassionate and kind,
You brought joy to the oppressed; many souls
Did you save from misery, guiding them home.
Strong, good, powerful One who has attained a throne
Like all the Apostles, Buddhas and Gods,
First to you will I pay homage, I (your) meanest son
Who was left behind as a homeless orphan by you, Father.
[Additional note]: Come, let us write a letter to the beneficent King of Light, We will request him: Forgive us our sins!

The Living Spirit and the Mother of Life create the World

This Sogdian text, the last page form a cosmogonic passage, uses the image of the Oriental bazaar to describe the world created by the gods for the purpose of extracting the Light from the "mixture" with kyle, matter to which it has succumbed.

[The Father of Light orders the Living Spirit and the Mother of Life to create the world]... and clean them (the Elements of Light) of the poison of Ahriman and (thus) purify them; and then raise them to Paradise.

Thereupon at once the Lord of the Seven Climes (the Living Spirit) and the Mother of the Righteous Ones began to plan how to arrange this world. They began to fashion it. First they made five rugs, on which they seated the Keeper of Splendor (the first son of the Living Spirit). Under them they formed ten firmaments and set up one magic twelve-faceted lens. There they seated a Son of God as watcher, so that in all the ten firmaments the demons could do no harm. Furthermore he evoked forty angels, who hold up the ten firmaments.

In each firmament they fashioned twelve gates; they constructed another four gates in each of the four directions, there where those angels stand. The thickness of the ten firmaments is ten myriad parsangs; again, (the thickness) of the air (between them) is one myriad parsang.

For each of the twelve gates in each of the firmaments, they constructed six thresholds, to each thresholds thirty bazaars, in each bazaar twelve rows, [in each row two sides]. On one side they made 180 stalls, on the other side (another) 180. In every stall they fettered and caged yakshas and demons, the males and females separately.

Thereupon the Maker of All (Vishparkar, the Living Spirit) called the Lord of the firmaments. They seated him on a throne in the seventh heaven and made him the lord and king over all the ten firmaments.

Then, below the firmaments, they fashioned a revolving wheel and zodiac. Within the zodiac they fettered those of the demons of Darkness that were the most iniquitous, vicious, and rebellious. They made the twelve constellations and the seven planets rulers over the whole Mixed World, and set them in opposition to each other.

From all the demons that had been imprisoned in the zodiac they weaved, warp and woof, the roots, veins and links. In the lowest firmament they bored a hole and suspended the zodiac from it. Two Sons of God (sons of the Living Spirit) were placed by them (there) as watchers, so as to... the Superior Wheel continually.

8. CHRISTIANITY ON THE SILK ROAD

(Richard C. Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Exchange from Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century*, New York: St. Martin's Press, New York, 1999. Permission pending)

Christianity's first link with the Silk Road was via the Babylonian Jews. Christians under Sasanian rule (after 224 CE) lived a precarious existence. Individual emperors tolerated them but the magi were always lobbying against Iran's non-Zoroastrian religious communities.

> The Christians destroy our holy teachings, and teach men to serve one God and not to honor the sun or fire. They teach them, too, to defile water by their ablutions, to refrain from marriage and the procreation of children, and to refuse to go to war with the Shahenshah. They have No scruple about the slaughter and eating of animals, they bury the corpses of men in the Earth, and attribute the origin of snakes and creeping things to a good God. They despise many Servants of the King, and teach witchcraft.

When in the 5th century Christians had a disagreements about how Mary should be described, whether as the "Bearer of Christ", or as the "Mother of God." Nestorius, a Syrian bishop, appointed Patriarch of Constantinople in 428, took the position that he "could not imagine God as a little boy." Followers of Nestorius seceded to form the Church of the East, and by 497, Nestorianism became the official doctrine of Christian Asia.

9. A NESTORIAN GRAVESTONE

(Thacker, T.W, A Nestorian Gravestone from Central Asia in the Gulbenkian Museum, in *Durham University Journal*, 59:2, March 1967. Permission pending)

The Gulbenkian Museum, at Durham University possesses an inscribed stone. In the center of one of the flat faces of the stone an ornamental cross is carved. It is surrounded by two lines of inscription, the language of which is Syriac, written in the Nestorian script.

The inscription gave a clue to the provenance of the stone. It showed that it is a medieval Nestorian grave-stone and Turkic month names in it suggested that it most probably came from some area where a Turkic language was spoken. After some search I was therefore able to identify it as one of a number of Nestorian grave-stones discovered towards of the end of the last century.

The grave-stones were found on sites in the east of the present-day Kazakhstan. This was a wild mountainous region, which for centuries had been inhabited by nomad tribes of Kirghiz Turks who spoke an eastern Turkic dialect.

In the autumn of the year 1885 a certain Dr. Poyarkov, one of the Russian residents in the area, chanced upon a number of stones carved with crosses and inscriptions on a site south of Tokmak, a village lying in the valley of the river Chu. Writing in the local weekly newspaper of Tokmak, he says:

> I found stones with the representation of a cross and with inscriptions in a language unknown to me and to the native inhabitants here. It is remarkable that the cross is exactly our Russian one and with the same variants. The representation of the cross is remarkably correct from the orthodox point of view. Up to now I have found more than 20 stones and I think I shall find still more. On all the stones there is a cross, but not all are inscribed; on some stones the inscriptions have been obliterated by time... I think that on the stones with a cross there will turn out to be a whole literature! Only to what age and people it belongs, God alone knows. Asia is indeed a land of wonders.

Later, on the same site, Dr. Poyarkov found graves with skeletons facing the east with their hands on their breasts. Apart from a metal ring on the finger of one of the skeletons, he found nothing in the graves.

A Russian semitist, Professor D.A. Chwolson confirmed in an article published in 1886 that the burials were Christian, the occupants of the graves were Nestorian Christians the majority of whom were of the Turkic race, and had died in the 13th and 14th centuries.

Many of the inscriptions record that the deceased

held an ecclesiastical office or describe him or her as 'the believer.' From Syrian and Arabic literary sources it was well known that members of the Nestorian Church had penetrated into the heart of Asia on missionary activities and had established centers of Christianity there at an early date. Marco Polo and Catholic missionaries writing in the 13th and 14th centuries also mention the Nestorians in those parts, but prior to the stone discoveries no traces of their presence in Central Asia had been found. With the forcible conversion of the Turkic Christians to Islam, Christian monuments were destroyed. These tomb-stones were therefore of outstanding importance and interest, especially as they come right at the end of the Christian period.

The following is the translation of the inscription on the Durham stone:

> In 1638 (i.e. A.D. 1326) it was the year of the Hare. This is the grave of Yohanan (i.e. John) called Akpash, the son of Denkha, the head of the Church.

These grave-stones have never received the attention that they merit. Carefully studied in conjunction with the literary sources, they could yield much information about the organization of a mediaeval Nestorian Christian community. They were over-shadowed by the more spectacular discoveries made by the Russian, British, French and German expeditions to Central Asia in the early part of this century.

10. THE SHAMANS OF MONGOLIA

(Peter Jackson and David Morgan, *The Mission of William of Rubrick*, London: The Hakluyt Society, 1990, pp.21-24. Permission pending)

Friar William Rubrick, who was sent by Louis IX of France, and traveled to Mongolia as a missionary presented an informative and interesting source of information about Mongolia and its religion in particular.

The religious beliefs and practices of the early Mongols belonged, like those of the pre-Islamic Turks, to those generally labeled as shamanistic. A major difficulty is that most of the evidence comes from a later date, after the importation of many elements from the Lamaistic Buddhism of Tibet in the sixteenth century. We cannot be certain, therefore, what exactly constituted shamanism in the thirteenth; and indeed Rubruck is our main contemporary source. The Mongols appear to have believed in a single god (called *Tenggeri*) in Heaven, together with an earth- or fertility-goddess, *Itügen*. But much of their religious observance derived its origin from ancestor-worship and centered on contact with the spirits of the dead. Rubrick describes the images of ancestors, which were kept in the family's tents and carried around in wagons: the supervision of these *ongghod* was one of the shamans' particular concerns. The functions of the 'soothsayers' included prophecy, exorcism, the prescription and conduct of festivals, and changing the weather. A common method of divination, in which Rubruck saw the *qaghan* Möngke engaged on more than one course of action through the manner in which a sheep's shoulder-blade cracked and split when burned on a fire. Associated with this world, finally, were a number of taboos. It was forbidden to tread on the threshold when entering or leaving a dwelling, and Rubruck's colleague Bartholomew of Cremona narrowly escaped the death penalty for having done so. Everything brought into the encampment, or that belonged to a dead person, had to be purified by fire. The Mongols did not regard shamanistic beliefs and rituals as necessarily incompatible with the elements of other faiths. The reason, as has been pointed out, may have been that shamanism was exclusively concerned with the material needs of the present life, and not with affecting one's prospects in a life to come. It was consequently possible to adopt Christianity, for example, while continuing to seek guidance from the shamans and practice divination.

11. CONVERSION TO ISLAM

(Richard C. Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Exchange from Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. Permission pending)

In the literature about Central Asia, one enduring theme is the region as a sacred place; in other words, much of its meaning for society comes from its associations with the sacred. Shrines play a major role in imagining the landscape. Other cultures have cathedrals or temples or idols. In Central Asia it is almost always a tomb – the threshold or doorway to the spiritual world and to what lies beyond human experience. The shrine is most often the burial place of

a saint but it can also be the site where people think the saint may have rested. In very rare cases, the site could be a place where a relic is preserved such as the cloak of the Prophet and the Prophet's hair, the most sacred relics in Central Asian Islam.

Unlike Buddhism, Muslim expansion in Central Asia was driven by economic expansion, and establishment of political power. In fact, no religious tradition in world history favored trade as much as did Islam. Although Arab Muslim saw Islam as a religion belonging to them and had strong reasons not to want non-Arabs to join the faith, by moving on East with the conversion the Arab armies were simply doing what the economic conditions of their homeland had always constrained them to do. At the same time, since Muslims ruled over the western half of the Silk Road and controlled much of the trans-Asian trade, converts to Islam along the Silk Road had increased chances of getting a better job, establishing better commercial contacts and receiving patronage. Because of these non-spiritual reasons of conversion, Central Asian Islam remained a less rigid form of the Muslim religion. In some ways, local pastoral nomadic and agriculturalist religions in Central Asia, never really disappeared, rather, it acquired Islamic meanings, interpretations, and appearances. The following two pieces discuss the peculiarities of Central Asian Islam.

The first Central Asians to be converted to Islam were inhabitants of Transoxiana (present Uzbekistan) were an Iranian stock known as Sogdians, remotely related to the Scythians. They spoke an Iranian language which survives today in remote areas of Tajikistan. They were early converts to Islam, a decision which meshed with the fact that Muslims were taking over the trade routes and if the Sogdians wanted to remain in business it would be wise to be part of the dominant group. But Islam came to Central Asia through the filter of Persian culture, a prominent non-Arab influence. Islam became increasingly Persian in character. To a large extent, Islamic law, philosophy, literature, art and mysticism all developed in the Persian cultural sphere. It was therefore a very Persianized form of Islam that penetrated and transformed Central Asia over the next several centuries.

An interesting example is language. No religious tradition is more scripture-bound than Islam and Muslims do not believe in the translation of the Qur'an from Arabic. But in reality Arabic played less of a role in the transmission of Islam to the peoples of the Silk Road than Persian did. The Qur'an was translated into Persian or, among the steppe nomads, preached in local languages like Turkish. In general, there would appear to be a connection between the success of a religion in winning converts and the readiness with which the substance of that religion was translated into local vernaculars.

12. CENTRAL ASIAN ISLAM

(Bosworth, C.E., Islamic Frontiers in Africa and Asia, in *The Legacy of Islam*, 2nd ed, Oxford, 1974, pp.116-130. © Oxford Univeristy Press 1974. Reprinted from The Legacy of Islam by C. E. Bosworth (2nd edition, 1979) by permission of Oxford University Press.)

Because the conversion of the steppes was undertaken mainly by Sufi mystics and holy men, and not by the rigorists of the *ulema*, Islam there has always shown a considerable elasticity in both belief and practice. In general, the Turks adopted the comparatively liberal Hanafi law school; the Shafi'i Ibn Fadlan comments unfavorably on the Bulghars' addiction to buza, a drink fermented from honey and wheat, and four centuries later, the *Maliki* Ibn Battuta noted the popularity in the steppes of *nabidh*, here a liquor fermented from millet. Nor were the animistic beliefs of the Turks immediately overlaid by the new faith. There was, rather, a process of adaptation and assimilation on these margins of the Islamic world, just as there was in India, Indonesia, and Black Africa. A Sufi saint like Ahmad Yasawi (d. 1166), whose tomb on the lower Syr Darya was for long highly venerated by the Turks, was regarded with much the same sort of respect as had been given to the Turks' shamans; indeed, the modern Turkish scholar Fuad Koprulu detected more than one element of the shamanistic past in the practices of the Yasawiyya order which Ahmad founded.

The penetration of the Eurasian steppes by Islamic religion and culture continued till Russian expansionism checked it and forced Islam on to the defensive in such regions as the Volga basin, the Caucasus, and Siberia. During the preceding centuries, Islam had successfully

overlaid such rival faiths as Latin and Nestorian Christianity and Manicheism, and only the Lamaist Buddhism adopted by the Mongols had withstood its dynamic; the civilizing influence of Islam has thus been a leading factor in the historical development of Inner Asia.

13. BATTLE AT TALAS

(Battle at Talas, in *Aramco World*, vol 42:6 November-December 1991, pp. 24-49. Permission pending)

The Muslims' Central Asian conquests put them on a collision course with China. The two super-powers met for the first and only time in 751, at Talas near Dzhambul in present-day Soviet Kazakstan, in a battle to determine which of the two civilizations – Muslim or Chinese – would dominate Central Asia.

The clash at Talas lasted five days, with the two titans attacking, retreating, reforming, and attacking again inconclusively, until finally, joined by the mounted bowmen of the Qarluq Turks, the Muslim Arabs won the day.

Chinese chronicles say the Turks treacherously changed sides in the midst of the action, attacking them from the rear; Arab historians claim the Turks had been secretly allied with them all along, and that the attack from behind was part of a carefully pre-arranged battle plan.

Whatever the case, the Chinese army broke and fled, leaving the Muslims to rule Central Asia for the next 200 years, and bestowing upon the region the Muslim religion and the Arabic script, both of which have flourished there almost ever since. By the 10th century, Buddhism, Manicheism, and Zoroastrianism had virtually ceased to exist in Central Asia, and Islam had become the predominant religion of the vast region.

The battle at Talas was not only a political and military landmark; it had important technological consequences too. Chinese prisoners captured at Talas and taken to Samarkand taught the Arabs how to make paper – a process the Arabs in turn transmitted to the West.

14. ISLAMIZATION OF THE GOLDEN HORDE

(Reprinted from *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition*, by Devin De Weese, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994, pp. 3-5. Copyright 1994 by The Pennsylvania State University. Reproduced by permission of the publisher.)

On his mission to Central Asia William Rubruck noted the presence Islam and Muslims. His comments contain many of the sentiments that have dominated popular and scholarly attitudes toward Islam in regard to the world of Inner Asia. Western travelers often doubted the seriousness of Muslims in this world, assuming that Islam was "nominal" in Inner Asia. The Bulghars of the Volga who had adopted Islam by the 10th c. were very firm Muslims. Rubruck did not understand that and by the time he was able to comprehend the seriousness of their acceptance of Muslim law, he then fell back on the familiar Western theme of fanatical Islam. In fact, at one time, Rubruck wrote, "I wonder what devil carried the law of Machomet (Mohammed) there."

The following is a conversion narrative which developed soon after the reign of Özbek Khan of the Golden Horde (1313-1341 A.D.). The central character of the narrative, Baba Tükles, was the object of a range of narrative elaboration, popular devotion and saintly and shamanistic invocation among the people of the western half of the Inner Asian World. The setting appears to be a sacred burial ground. The ceremony is spoiled, setting the stage for a religious confrontation.

When the Khan asked why the ceremony had failed, his shaykhs said, "probably a Muhammadan has come near, and this is his sign." The khan commanded, "Go and look beyond the royal reserve, and if there is a Muhammadan there, bring him." When the servants went out and investigated beyond the royal reserve, they saw that outside the royal reserve four persons of a different appearance were seated with their heads cast down. The servants said, "What kind of people are you?" They said, "Take us into the Khan's presence," and they brought them there. The Khan's gaze settled upon them; and because God most high illuminated the Khan's heart with the light of guidance, and attraction and affection appeared in his heart toward those whom he saw. He asked, "What kind of people are you, and on what business have you come?" They said, "We are Muhammadans, and we have come by the command of God most high in order to make you a Muslim."

At this moment, the Khan's shaykhs cried out saying, "These are bad people; one should kill them

rather than speak with them." The Khan said, "Why should I kill them? I am *pādshāh*; I have no cause for alarm from any of you. Whoever's religion may be true, why was your work today confounded and left without effect? So debate with one another; whoever among you has the religion that is true. I will follow him."

These two parties fell into discussion with one another, and together made much turmoil and contention. At last they gave him their decision: they would dig two oven-pits and fire up each with ten cartloads of wood; one person from the sorcerers would enter one oven, and one person from among these saints would enter the other oven. "Whoever emerges without being burned, his religion will be true," they resolved.

The four Muslim discussed which one of them should go. One of them was called Baba Tükles because all of his limbs were covered with body hair. "Give me permission; let me go in. You fix your attention on me...Prepare armor for me." They placed the armor over his bare flesh. Baba began to walk toward the oven pit, reciting the Sufi dhikr. "They say that the Baba's hair stood straight up and came out through the eyelets of the armor; everyone saw this phenomenon."

[At this point the narrative shifts to the "pagan sorcerers" who grabbed one of their fellows and cast him in the oven, where he was immediately consumed.]

And the voice of the Baba uttering his recitation came uninterruptedly out of the other oven. When it was presumed that the sheep's flesh (which covered the opening) was fully cooked, they opened the mouth of the oven; and the Baba, wiping the sweat from his blessed face, came out of the oven saying, "Why did you hurry? If you had held off for a time, my business would have been finished." They saw that his armor was glowing red-hot, but by the power of God most high not a hair of the Baba's body was burned. When all the people, beginning with the Khan, saw this situation, they at once grasped hold of the hems of the shaykh's garments and became Muslims; praise be to God for the religion of Islam!

The Özbek nation had become Muslim in the time of Berke Khan, and after him they apostatized and became infidels. But the great Özbek Khan became a Muslim, and since then the Islam of the Özbek nation has not wavered.

CULTURE AND CUSTOMS

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It is clear that this region of the world, this nexus of crossing ideas and belief systems, was also a region with many adopted and adapted cultural practices. As people intermarried and groups converged, there was the selection process of accepting those customs which were suitable for the area in terms of geography and history. These readings attempt to present the flavors of the cultures and customs of Inner Asia.

1. THE GOLDEN HORSES

(Jonathan Maslow, The Golden Horses of Turkmenistan, in *Aramco World*, May/June 1997. Reprinted by Permission.)

The early inhabitants of Central Asia practiced agriculture and animal breeding. Struggling to survive in severe conditions of drought in the summers and harsh freezes in the winters, many tribal leaders resorted to military conquests of enlarged territories. The next two pieces will depict the early inventions of Central Asian tribes, that became useful in their militarized nomadic pattern of life. The two main inventions were horseback riding and chariot building. Analysis of bit-wear on horse premolars from the site of Dereivka established that horses were bitted repeatedly and probably ridden as early as 4000 BC.

Beautiful beyond compare, valuable beyond measure, with their shining golden coats and matchless endurance, Akhal Teke horses are the defining icon of Turkmen culture. Perhaps the oldest pure-blooded horse extant, horses of the Akhal Teke type have been bred in the trans-Caspian region of Central Asia for several thousand years, though not always under the name Akhal Teke, and not always by the Turkmens.

In this tough, unforgiving land, where in about 10,000 BC, the Central Asian climate began drying out. The stocky horses of the steppe grasslands adapted to the changing conditions, developing svelte frames, more modest food and water requirements. As the rains failed, the rivers shriveled, the inland seas shrank, and the steppe became progressively more arid. Settled agrarian peoples were forced into nomadism, often as horse-mounted warriors.

In the fourth century BC, when Alexander the Great reached Margiana – literally then the "margin" of the known world – near present-day Mary in southern Turkmenistan, he met fierce resistance from nomadic Sacae and Massagetae, tribes that already employed the stiff saddle and were skilled in cavalry tactics.

Before him, in the fifth century BC, Herodotus had written of the Scythians, a nomadic power that in Herodotus' time dominated much of the region north of the Black Sea, "Their country," he said, "is the back of a horse." Russian archeologists have found Scythian war-horses almost perfectly preserved in frozen barrow tombs in the Altay Mountains; they show that as early as 500 BC the nomads were selecting for tall, dry, fast horses, similar in all respects to the Akhal Teke. These war-horses of Central Asia became famous throughout the ancient world, and were known variously – epending on time and place – as Median, Bactrian, Sogdian, Hyrcanian, Chorasmian, or Parthian. A Chinese emperor of the second century BC sent a party to Central Asia to bring back what the Chinese called "the horses of heaven" or the "thousand-li" horses, so called because they could run a thousand li without tiring, and according to the Chinese account sweated blood.

More than a millennium later, probably to fight Genghis Khan and the Mongols, the Islamic khanates of Khiva and Khwarizm, now in modern Uzbekistan, looked westward to hire mercenary Oguz calvary, Turkic in language, culture and horsemanship. When Marco Polo traveled the Silk Road through modern Turkmenistan on his way to Cathay, he wrote on the first page of his famous Travels of his encounter with "Turcomans," who were, he said, "a primitive people speaking a barbarous language," but who deserved praise for both their carpets and their "good Turcoman horses."

One of the most detailed descriptions that we have of the Akhal-Teke horse in its indigenous habitat dates from the 1882 memoirs of Henri Moser, a Swiss citizen living in St. Petersburg:

> The Turkmen horses have acquired the highest reputation, even beyond the frontiers of Central Asia. Already in the time of Alexander the Great the horses of Sogdiana were famous. Marco Polo said that their hooves were so hard that they did not need shoes.
>
> Over the centuries their blood has been renewed from outside at times; thus Timur, wishing to improve it, distributed 5000 Arabian mares to the Turkmen, and in the nineteenth century Nasr al-Din gave them 500. Nevertheless, the Teke resembles the English thoroughbred rather than the Arabian horse; tall, clean cut, with slender legs, narrow-chested, he has a long thin neck, very prominent withers, and a large and sometimes disproportionately heavy head, with the hindquarters comparatively light...
>
> There are no horse breeding farms among the Tekes; the horse is brought up among the tents or houses, and only the mares follow the flocks and herds of the shepherds to pasture; they are very little ridden, being used only to transport riders for short distances. The stallion, brought up amongst human dwellings, is gentle toward his rider, and extremely intelligent.
>
> A Turkmen proverb says "To turn a colt into a horse, the owner becomes a dog." But the curry comb and brush are unknown; grooming is here reduced to its most basic expression. Armed with his knife, the Turkmen scrapes the horse's coat in the direction of the hair, from front to back, and then polishes it with the sleeve of his robe or a piece of felt. The colt is covered night and day with pieces of felt whose number is increased with his age. Two or three felts, shaped like a saddle blanket, cover the withers of the adult horses, usually pitted with the scars of ancient wounds, and are only lifted up with the greatest care; the Teke maintains that air and light are harmful to this delicate part of the spine. The Tekes say that "the fat of our horses must melt." Indeed, they have only muscles. On account of all these coverings, the skin and the hair are finer than in any other horse. The shining coat has unbelievable colors, metallic bronze and old gold, which have an astonishing effect in the sunlight...
>
> The Tekes understand horse training very well; whilst developing the animal's action, they manage to reduce his food, and particularly the water, to an unbelievable minimum; dried lucerne [alfalfa] is replaced by chopped straw, and our oats by barley flour mixed with mutton fat...

He rides with loose reins, leaving his horse quite free; with his naturally elegant head carriage the horse chooses his way with remarkable instinct through the rugged mountain passes. Perched high up on the saddle, the blankets oblige the rider to keep his legs wide apart and straight with the feet thrust into the stirrups. At gallop the rider stands up in his stirrups, the body leaning forward. The Teke horse has only two gaits, the gallop and a walk which becomes a pace or a single foot running walk. At this gait the Turkmen make their long journeys of eight days, staying in the saddle for 20 hours out of the 24.

Since he is never beaten, this animal is extremely gentle with humans, although fierce with his own kind; when a stallion manages to break loose he gets into terrible fights extremely dangerous for anyone who may be near. It is useless to try and separate them if the owner is not present, he on the other hand, can with a simple "Dour, dour," [gently, gently] usually manage to calm his steed, where a stranger might break his neck.

When a woman marries, she brings as dowry a certain number of felt blankets that she has made. Amongst them there has to be a very fine cover for the saddle of her husband's horse.

2. BIRTH OF THE CHARIOT

(David W. Anthony and Nikolai B. Vinogradov, Birth of the Chariot, in *Archaeology*, March/April 1995, pp. 36-41. Reprinted with the permission of *Archaeology* Magazine, Vol. 48, No. 2. Copyright the Archeological Institute of America, 1995.)

Graves in the Russian and Kazakh steppes have yielded the earliest evidence of chariots. Archaeologists call the culture Sintashta-Petrovka, after two representatives sites dating ca. 2100-1700 BC. They believe Sintashta-Petrovka was a proto-Aryan community out of which grew the Andronovo horizon, the first prehistoric culture to extend across the entire steppe from the Urals to the Tien Shan Mountains in western China. The Sintashta-Petrovka artifacts may answer important questions about this early period including the origins of chariot technology and its spread south into Anatolia and across the Eurasian steppe to China.

Sintashta-Petrovka chariots were narrow vehicles, probably suitable for one person. If the single charioteer wanted to use a bow and arrow or a spear, he would have had to loop the reins around his body and lean back to brake, or twist to the side to turn, a driving technique documented in Etruscan and Roman racing scenes, and in Egyptian depictions of hunting and battle scenes in which single archers shoot from chariots.

The question may arise why would people have needed chariots in warfare if they rode horses from at least 4000 BC? Perhaps they had not yet developed a short bow with which to shoot arrows from horseback. When the short, compound bow first appeared in the steppes, ca. 1500 BC, chariot burials ceased, and cavalry gained in importance.

It is also possible that the steppe chariot was not used in warfare, but rather in ritual races that offered prizes or settled disputes. Such use of chariots is described in the hymns of the Rig Veda. The Rig Veda is a religious text containing hymns and rituals collected ca. 1000-800 BC by a people known as Aryans who came to Afghanistan. One of the most sacred rituals described is the racehorse sacrifice. The animal is preceded by a goat, the symbol of Pusan, the god of paths and ways, who will lead the sacrificed horse to the heavens.

The chariot follow you. Swift Runner; the young man follows, the cow follows, the love of young girls follows. The troops follow your friendship. The gods entrusted virile power to you.
Your body flies, Swift Runner; your spirit rushes like the wind.
Your mane, spread in many directions, flickers and jumps about in the forests [like sunlight].
The racehorse comes to the slaughter, pondering with his heart turned to the gods. The goat, his kin, is led in front; behind come the poets, the singers...

Let this racehorse bring us good cattle and good horses, male children and all-nourishing wealth. Let Aditi (a goddess) make us free from sin. Let the horse with our offerings achieve sovereign power for us.

3. WISDOM OF ROYAL GLORY (*KUTADGU BILIG*)

(Yusuf Khass Hajib, *Wisdom of Royal Glory (Kutadgu Bilig): A Turko-Islamic Mirror for Princes*, translated by Robert Dankoff, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983, pp. 1, 187, 189, 217. Reprinted by permission. All rights of performance, professional and amateur, are strictly reserved. Requests for permission should be addressed to the publisher.)

"Kutadgu Bilig" is the oldest monument of Islamic Turkish literature. A long didactic poem, it consists mainly of dialogues set within a frame story. The following are some written wisdoms excerpted from the work:

How to Raise Children

You have moonlike children, raise them in your own home, do not give them to others to bring up. Hire a good and pure wetnurse. Then the children will grow up pure and live contented. Educate both sons and daughters in wisdom and good manners, for these will profit them in both the worlds. Take a wife for your son, give your daughter to a husband, then live without care, O fortunate one! Teach your son all the virtues, for knowing these he will save his wealth. Do not let your son wander freely, or he will be good for nothing and will run fast and loose. And do not keep your daughter too long at home unmarried, or you will die full of regrets though you be free of ailments.

Let me speak frankly about daughters, my friend. The best is if they are not born at all, or else do not survive. And if one is born, better for her the bosom of mother earth: if she dwells in a house, better that it should neighbor the camp of the dead. Keep women indoors at all times for a woman's inside is not like her outside. And do not bring strangers in the house, nor let your women out, for the roving eye that sees her on the street will want to possess her. What the eye does not see, the heart does not desire: but what the eye sees, the heart desires. So guard your eye, my son, and your heart will not desire. And as long as your heart does not long for a thing, you will not end up its captive.

Do not let women mingle with men while eating and drinking, for once you do, they will go beyond the limit. And do not let women out of the house, for once they are out they will lose the straight path. A woman is basically flesh, and flesh must be preserved. If it is not preserved, it begins to smell, and then there is no cure for it. So treat women with respect and give them what they ask for: but lock the door of your house and keep other men away. There is no constancy with these creatures, and there never has been. Wherever their eye looks their heart follows. A tree raised up with inconstancy gives poison fruit: do not hunger after it. How many stalwart and manly men have been cut off at the root because of women. Many a man with ruddy cheeks and honor-lustered face has turned to earth because of women. Thousands of world-renowned and valiant men have been buried alive by women. Indeed, how is one to guard women at all? May God who guards all keep guard over them!

The Etiquette of Going to Feasts

This too is necessary to know, my brother. All sorts of people may invite you, and there are many different types of celebrations. There is one for a wedding, another for a circumcision, still another for the birth of a son. Peers and friends may issue the invitation, or kith and kin; your superiors or your inferiors. Then there is the funeral feast, in commemoration of one departed. Or else a man who receives a title of rank may give a feast for all and sundry. Whenever you are invited to one of these occasions, weigh carefully whether to go or not. Should your peers or your kinsmen invite you, then join their celebration and pay due regard to their guests, be the fare rich or poor. And if a close neighbor or a friend in God, prepares a feast for your sake, go out of consideration for him, enjoy yourself and give him joy.

Whatever sort of celebration you may attend, you will dine with good manners if you are wise. An ill-bred person, stupid and ungainly, is bewildered when he sees a man of good breeding. It is correct to wait for your superior to put forth his hand to eat before you do. Then serve yourself with your right hand. Pronounce the name of God: then your food will increase and you will grow rich. Do not reach out to take a morsel in front of someone else, but eat what is before you. Do not draw your knife at table or strip a bone. Do not eat greedily or messily. No matter how replete one may be he must still eat, my brother; so give bites, and do not blow on the food to cool it. Do not wipe your hands on things for others. Follow the rules of etiquette. Ill-mannered people cause others harm. The chief of protocol well said: If a man observes the proprieties, he rises to the seat of honor. Everything has its forms and customs and rules. As long as a man practices decorum, his face is bright. But if he fails to observe the norms and codes of society, his affairs will never prosper.

Eat with moderation. A rare and wise man told me this. He who overeats finds that his food is raw, and he who eats raw food is plagued with illness. Now illness enters through the throat, so guard that member, and eat and drink little. When a man is seized with illness, he grows weak; and if he does not treat it, death comes on apace.

Adam's son, if he claims to be human, should be able to distinguish hot and cold. He must understand the body's natural constitution, eat what agrees with it and refrain from what does not. If the hot element is dominant, drink something cold; if the cold is dominant, balance it with something hot. If you are young, and it is spring time, take things that are cold by nature, they will cool your blood. If you are past forty, and it is autumn, regulate your humor with something hot. And if you are sixty, and the season is winter, take hot things only, nothing cold. When the dry and the cold are ascendant, prepare the hot and the wet, for these two will offset those. While if wet and cold predominate and do you harm, oppose them with hot and dry. If your humor is cold, then overcome it with hot; if hot, then continually eat and drink cold. Thus you will keep your natural constitution in just proportion, and your life will pass in health and tranquility. Hearken to the words of the physician, my lamb:

> The bodily humors I recount:
> Red blood, white phlegm, yellow bile and black.
> They are enemies each to each.
> When one advances drive it back.

In order to keep one's natural humors in balance one must eat only what agrees, and this requires the exercise of intellect. This, my son, is what distinguishes man from beast. So heed these words of the wise graybeard and do not remain a savage: If a man reaches forty and does not know his own natural humor, then he is wholly a beast, albeit he may speak. Any man who does not learn by experience; any who fails to correct his conduct by judging past results; in short any who has grown old but not wise, cannot be considered human; he is rightly called an animal.

The physicians put it in a nutshell: he who eats little stays healthy and cheerful. If you want to live free of illness, swallow the medicine known as "little." If you want to live a long and happy life, chew the flesh known as "tongue!"

How to Govern the Realm

May the king make provision for all contingencies! Let no unseemly or wicked word on your tongue, for God would be displeased at that. O river-like in wisdom. You did not seek this princely office or acquire it by force. Rather, God granted it to you by His grace. He honored you thereby, and you ought to thank Him for it. Offer to God your service with a straightened heart and a purified soul, and to the people administer the law with compassion. Overcome your passion by means of intellect and crush your carnal self by means of wisdom: as the poet said:

> Fall not under Passion's sway:
> That is Religion's thief!
> Cut off his hand, or break his neck:
> Then you will have relief.

How have you become powerless, O king? You have the authority and the power to accomplish every good. Why sorrow thus grievously? Why embitter your

life? You already have much treasure and many troops. You also have wisdom and intellect to guide you. Make the troops happy by distributing the treasure among them, then demand of them a thousand favors in return. As one doughty general once said: Give silver and gold, you'll defeat the foe! If you would always have the upper hand, first satisfy your troops, give them praise and encouragement, then ask them to carry out your wish and bend the enemy's neck. Keep the mass of your troops happy for a year and they will give up for you their own dear souls on a day.

Crush the infidel foe with your armies, seeking strength and support from God. One who dies while fighting the infidel is not dead but alive. So direct all your weapons and troops against the infidel. Burn his house and hall, break his idol, and put a mosque and Muslim congregation in their place. Take captive his son and daughter, his male and female slaves. What wealth you take there, add to your own treasury. Open a way for Islam. Spread abroad the shar'iah. Thus you will gain a fair name and a good reward. But do not march against another Muslim, O king. His adversary is God alone. Muslims are brothers to one another: do not quarrel with your brother, keep on good terms with him always.

To the people give a law that will keep them secure. Then they will give you their benediction. God in turn will grant you His good pleasure. Thus both worlds will be yours, O brave one.

4. FROM THE CRADLE TO THE GRAVE

(Grace Halsell, From the Cradle to the Grave, in *Aramco World*, January-February 1990. Reprinted by Permission.)

Muslim traditions in Central Asia established so strongly that their ceremonial practices were able to survive the Communist anti-religious movements and they still take place now.

Birth of a child

When a child is born, a Central Asian Muslim asks the local *imam* or another member of the religious establishment to officiate at a name giving ceremony. When a son is circumcised – often at age four, five or six – the father asks a member of the *ulama* to officiate. "Circumcision has a special Islamic significance among Central Asians," an *imam* said. "It means that a young boy becomes a member of the universal community of Islam, that he is one with his fellow Muslims around the world."

Marriage

Jamila, a woman I met in the Ferghana Valley cotton fields, told me that when she and her husband were married, they had not only a civil ceremony, but a Muslim religious one as well, in the mosque in Ferghana. "Without a religious ceremony, we do not consider any couple married," Jamila said.

Later when I inquired of Ali, our Uzbek guide, how many couples have the Islamic religious ceremony when they marry, he said, "All do." Later he amended that to say that in the Ferghana Valley, "ninety-nine percent have the religious ceremony." And what I asked, if they are Communist Party members?

"They sometimes will ask the imam to come to the home anyway, for a religious service, but everyone keeps quiet about it."

I happened to be visiting with imams in two cities, Namangan and Ferghana, when in each place, the imam said he had to excuse himself to conduct a wedding ceremony. In each instance he added, "You are welcome to come along."

In Ferghana, I followed Imam Abdul Vali, 35, to a nearby room. I wondered if the couple would be nervous with a stranger in their midst, but the young bride and groom and their two witnesses gave no indication they felt me to be an unwelcome intruder.

The bride was wearing a long white gown, while the groom was in a business suit. They listened attentively as the imam read certain verses from the Qur'an, and when Imam Vali asked the bride if she accepted the groom as her husband, she gave a soft but audible affirmative reply. The groom gave her a gold ring, and as to their vows, the imam asked the two witnesses if they had heard. Each replied in their Uzbek Turkic language,

"Yes, I heard."

When the ceremony was over, the bride and groom invited me to have photos taken with them. They were as open and warm to me as if I had been family.

The wedding party, Ali said, was the biggest family event in the Muslim's life. "The previous day, women arrive at the home of the bride's parents and begin chopping carrots, maybe 100 to 200 kilos, that will go into a huge pilaf. Several sheep are slaughtered. Perhaps 400 to 500 guests will come to the celebration, mostly old people who are not tied to a regular job. The host will serve two or three meals in one day. He will have hired actors or other entertainers, and there will be music and dancing.

"The first night the married couple sleep in their clothes, they do not consummate their vows. On the second night, they do." Ali said that the practice of hanging out sheets to show the community that the bridegroom had won a virgin was still widely practiced, at least, he added, "here in Ferghana Valley."

5. MARRIAGE OF A PRINCE

(*A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art*, selected and translated by W.M. Thackston, Cambridge: The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1989, pp. 63, 247, 273, 279, 282, 287-291. Permission pending.)

The following is an excerpt from Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi's Zafarnama *(Book of Triumph) which was completed around 1425 A.D. for Ibrahim-Sultan Shahrukh, then governor of Shiraz. It met with universal literary acclaim in its day and was greatly admired in its own time – and for long thereafter – as the very model of elegant, eloquent historiography.*

...The impetus for holding this regal assembly was the marriage of the princes, for the every-correct mind of the Sahib-Qiran had seen that Prince Ulughbeg, Prince Ibrahim-Sultan and Prince Ejil – the sons of Prince Miranshah – and, of the sons of Prince Umar-Shaykh, Prince Ahmad, Prince Sidi-Ahmad and Bayqara should each and all be matched in matrimony with chaste maidens of noble descent.

A great assembly of judges, sharifs, and imams was convened. After correctly performing the preliminaries to the wedding, the Imam of Imams of the age, Shaykh Shamsuddin Muhammad Jazari, bestowed upon the gathering much happiness by intoning the address of marriage, and the chief *qadi* of Samarkand, Mawlana, Salahuddin, performed the inculcation of the words of assent and acceptance...

...When the princes and *noyans*, in accordance with the custom and ritual, drained one after another their goblets filled with ruby-red wine, and the ritual of toasting were completed, trays laden with more food and multitudes of more various edibles were set than can be described...

...Melodious singers and delightful musicians performed in the Turkish fashion, the Mongol manner, the Chinese style, the Arab way and the Persian mode. Among them, Khwaja Abdul-Qadir, who is too well known to need introduction, and others like him struck the qopuz, tighan and lute with the plectrum of pleasure and joy, as they joined harmoniously the voices of the instrumental ensemble of winds and strings.

When night came and the carpet of the earth was illuminated by such a multitude of torches and lanterns that it became a likeness of the Koranic verse, "we have adorned the lowest heaven with lamps," at the most felicitous of times and the happiest of hours the offspring of the celestial sphere of the sultanate were transported to the constellation of union, and thereupon the chamberlain of modesty lowered the curtain of delicacy before that inner sanctum in which the purveyors of words have no audience.

Among those who enjoyed the spectacular celebration and were staggered by such magnificence were foreign envoys, since from Egypt, Frankish lands, Hindustan, the Qipchaq and Jata Steppes emissaries had gathered at the world-receiving court. The Sahib-Qiran honored them along with the grandees and nobles who had assembled from various parts of the realm, and the *noyans* and martial lords, with splendid robes of

honor and abundant gratitude.

In that regal celebration revelry and joy lasted continuously for nearly two months...

6. READING THE WEAVES OF *KILIM*

(Alastair Hull and Joe Luczyc-Wyhowska, *Kilim: The Complete Guide*, London: Chronicle Books, 1993. Permission pending.)

Kilim *is a flat woven or pile-less carpet, made of natural wool and with natural dyes, a characteristic of Central Asian people that currently inhibit parts of modern Uzbekistan. For nomads of Central Asia, rug and* Kilim *weaving was a means of fulfilling many purposes. Not only the rugs served as easily mobile insulation for houses, as soft furniture, as means of storage, but also were used for doweries, religious ceremonies, and barter. Moreover, patterns of* Kilims *became a visual means of transition of history of the region, since for a long time there was no written system. Most traditions and folklore were transmitted through oral and visual media from mother to daughter.* Kilims *functioned as a form of visual communication, an expression of the hopes and wishes of the weaver in the form of motifs and symbolic talismans.*

As the wealthy townspeople of the Islamic empires sought out the finest textiles and weavers both within their own lands and abroad, the villagers and nomads continued to weave the traditional knotted and flat woven rugs and trappings that provided both the essentials and the comforts for basic existence. These peoples, particularly the nomads, had little else but the natural environment to provide them with all the elements necessary for weaving. Harvesting the wool and hair from their animals, synthesizing the dyes from whatever source was available and building the coarsely hewn looms from bushes and trees, the villagers and nomads have produced an astonishing array of rugs and trappings over the centuries. *Kilims* served as rugs, and the flat weave process facilitated the production of strong and colorful bags tied to the animals during migration, bands to secure the tents when erected and large sacks from the transportation of food and clothing. Tent walls for the division of the men's and women's areas were also often made from *Kilims.*

Kilims were used as door flaps, covers for food in preparation, eating cloths and prayer rugs. Guests would be treated to a fine array of the best flat weaves as a display of their hosts' status and hospitality; as the main room of a Muslim house contains little in the way of furniture, the host and guest would sit or recline on the floor, resting against a *balisht* floor cushion or rolls of bedding. In the summer months rugs would be spread outside in a shaded yard or on the flat roofs of the houses in the evening, to provide a comfortable refuge from the heat. Much the same arrangement exists in the tents of the nomads, who keep *Kilims* neatly in bags both to save space and for ease of transportation. As well as providing comfort, *Kilims*, together with jewelry, clothing, tent furnishings and animal trappings, expressed the identity of the village or nomadic group and served, along with the knotted rugs, precious metals and animals, as a form of family wealth. At a time of crisis, or need for a commodity that can neither be made nor gathered, any of these possessions could be bartered or exchanged for currency to use in the markets of the local market town.

Most importantly, the production of *Kilims* has remained an integral part of a young woman's, and her family's, opportunity to improve their standing through marriage, for not only does her weaving provide a useful source of wealth for her husband and his group, but it has also always formed a major part of the bride's dowry. Then, as now, the arrangement of marriage by the elders of the family was vitally important, and involved much more than the union of two people. A girl would be betrothed at an early age, becoming an instrument of liaison between two families and so creating possible financial, commercial and political benefit to at least the groom's family, if not to both parties concerned. The exchange of wealth was made by way of rugs, jewelry, animals and money, and the granting of grazing, water and irrigation rights. Therefore, the weaving of *Kilims* was an important skill to be mastered by a young bride, learned from her

mother and other women of the family. Every article would contain symbols of the family's traditions and tribal identity and totems of superstition, good luck and fertility, spiced with the personal inspiration of the future bride, whose youthful exuberance would be held in check by the mores and tenets of a conservative Muslim society. Such standards and codes, the laws of Islam and time-honored tribal traditions, have not quashed the vitality of tribal creativity, but have in fact provided a structured framework, a set of rules and guidelines, within which the imaginative potential and skills of the weaver may be disciplined. The constraints on self-expression have also ensured the continuity of tribal compositions, patterns and designs from generation to generation, and it is these elements, when combined with the zealous desire to create a dowry of quantity and quality, that explain why so many *Kilims* have been so painstakingly crafted over the centuries without a prospect of real commercial gain.

Kilim-weaving has also provided an opportunity for alms-giving, prescribed by the Koran. *Kilims*, donated by both the rich and poor of the community, not only provide colorful decoration for the mosque floor, they also serve as a many-layered, warm and comfortable ground for prayer and prostration. In Anatolia particularly, the prevalence of alms-giving has ensured that, at least until recently, the mosques have function as a depository of flat weave and knotted-rug local history.

The business of interpreting designs on oriental carpets, rugs and *Kilims* has presented Western collectors with perplexing problems. Traditions that determine the use of motifs and patterns in the flat weaves have a colorful oral ancestry, wherein the names for a pattern or motif have been communicated verbally from mother to daughter and from weaver to weaver over the generations. Until recently there has been no literacy, and no convenient means of drawing a cartoon of a rug or part of a pattern, so the teaching of traditional tribal designs and motifs has been conducted by word of mouth over the half-completed weave on the loom, and the associated mythology and symbolism related in fireside story-telling.

The nomadic and village lifestyle of the peoples of the flat weaving countries has changed little over centuries, and whereas the urban centers have developed artistically and culturally, the nomadic and village weavers have remained close to nature. Their cycle of life is simple, and their history has been told by one generation to the next, sung in songs by the family elders, and by shamans's recitations which may last for nights on end. This and others have been incorporated into the symbology of their *Kilims*, for they have no other means of recording history visually.

For nomads there are few possessions, and their heritage is represented by their tents, animals, cooking pots, few clothes and rugs, and their tribal traditions, beliefs and superstitions, which have until recently remained the same for hundreds of years. With the settlement of people into villages and the change from a trans-human to a settled agrarian lifestyle, the original tribal traditions that related closely to migration dissipated and evolved into village folklore. The changes were slow and subtle, and the role of women as the weavers in these societies had a profound influence on this folklore. The secret language of beliefs, potions, signs and skills – of which *Kilim* motifs are part – is handed down from mother to daughter. The ancestral tales remained but were overlaid with more recent stories and superstitions. The desires and aspirations of the settled village people became more immediate, and as wealth accumulated with the possession of goods and land, so the need for continuity and the wish for good fortune and fertility increased.

7. MARRIAGE CUSTOMS IN 17th CENTURY PERSIA

(*Women in the Medieval Islamic World*, edited by Gavin R.G. Hambly, St. Martin's Press: New York, 1998, pp. 386-387. Permission pending)

The following is a descriptive account of the marriage tradition in medieval Persia, which with the arrival of Islam, greatly influenced similar traditions of

Inner Asia. This detailed and picturesque description of the marriage ceremony shows both the beauty of tradition and its restraints on the couple's freedom.

In the choice of partners for marriage, those involved played relatively little part in the proceedings, the woman almost none. It was in the fullest sense of the term 'arranged.' The girl in most cases would not have seen her intended husband before the ceremony and knew nothing directly of his appearance, character or prospects. Lifelong celibacy was an unacceptable state, regarded almost unnatural and impious, whereas sexual desire had to be satisfied. Men were encouraged to experience sex at the earliest practical age but girls were carefully protected until their wedding nights. The desirability of favorable social or financial alliances was always an incentive in arranging marriages. Marriage between cousins was a common aspect of Persian life, but a close-knit family-association of intimate domesticity based on monogamy was not required for social cohesion, although the right to having four wives was subject to the provision of equality in treatment towards them, in accordance with Muslim custom. Nevertheless, the legalized institution of temporary wives for fixed terms of cohabitation and the prevalence of female slaves with equal parental rights in respect of their children quite frequently caused emotional strains in the collective household with its stability subjected to serious pressures occasioned by the usual frailties inherent in human life.

The arrangements for regular marriage were normally undertaken by an attorney *[vakil]* between people of a compatible temperament and comparable social status. The marriage ceremony *[arusi]* took place in the house of the parents of the girl, whose father with his close relatives received the visit of his future son-in-law and the latter's close relatives. The father embraced the husband-to-be, set him in the midst of the assembled company, and then retired. The bride's father did not participate in the signing of the marriage contract *[agd-nama]*, which was the responsibility of the husband-to-be. With the attorney and a cleric in a nearby room with a half-opened door, although still out of sight. Those acting of the respective parties declared their interests, stated the terms of the marriage settlement, and asked for the assent of the couple individually. Finally the cleric, confirming the agreement of the couple, authenticated the marriage document with his seal. The amount of pomp and ceremony on these occasions depended on the social status of those involved, as did the length and splendor of the accompanying processions and celebrations. Humbler folk might dispense with an attorney, and the bride-to-be in the presence of a cleric, and declare her acceptance of the marriage terms.

After the wedding ceremony was concluded, in accordance with the financial terms which had been agreed to, the husband despatched money, ring, and presents of clothes and jewels. The wife offered love tokens such as toiletries, embroideries, and gifts of her own making. The wedding celebrations might last for ten days. On the tenth day, in broad daylight, the bride was sent her trousseau which, depending on her status, consisted of clothes, jewels, furnishings, slaves, and eunuchs, carried generally on camels, horses, mules or donkeys, and accompanied by music. Sometimes, to create a favorable impression, some items were borrowed or empty boxes were displayed as if they were full.

That night, the bride was conveyed to her husband's house in a litter transported on a camel to the sound of music, with dancers cavorting in the streets and servants carrying candles. The bride was completely veiled from head to toe and over the veil was draped another veil of silk or gold thread reaching to her waist so that her figure and appearance were completely concealed to prevent the jealous and envious from casting spells upon her.

While thus traveling from her old to her new home the bride was supported by a eunuch but on dismounting she was led by the hand by women friends. After gaining her new home and the wedding feast being ended, elderly women brought her to the bridal room and undressed her down to her underclothes. Shortly afterwards, the husband was escorted to the same room by eunuchs or old women in complete darkness. In this manner, neither husband nor wife saw each other. If, as

sometimes happened, the marriage was not immediately consummated, the wife remained hidden in the women's quarters until the husband was ready or his wife's modesty dispelled. Invariably, the obligations of the wife towards her husband prevailed over her own sentiments.

8. A HOSPITABLE HOME IN THE KIRGHIZ STEPPE

(Stein, M. Aurel, *Sand-buried Ruins of Khotan*, London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903, pp. 86-88. Permission pending)

The journey mentioned here was carried out in the year 1900-01, under the auspices of the Government of India. Its main objective was the systematic exploration of ancient remains about Khotan and in the adjoining parts of the great desert of Chinese Turkestan. It was lead by a famous archeologist of the time, Aurel Stein. On his way, he visited a yurt, a local mobile home of the nomadic Kirgiz people. This is how he described his visit:

In the afternoon the clouds lifted a little and showed the mountain slopes down to a few hundred feet above the level of the valley clad in fresh snow. No encouraging prospect for my Muztagh-Ata excursion, which if to be made at all must be made within the next few days! I used the short interval when the rain stopped in the evening for a visit to the *Beg's* yurt. He seemed to appreciate the compliment, and whatever doubts he may feel as to the results of any assistance he may render me, they did not interfere with a display of cordial hospitality. In the middle of the yurt, a big cauldron ("*kazan*") of milk was boiling over the fire. One of the *Beg's* wives, no longer young, but of a pleasing expression and cleanly dressed, was attending to the fire of dwarf juniper.

While the dish was getting ready, I had time to look about and to examine the homestead. Comfortable it looked in contrast to the misty, grey plain outside. The wickerwork sides and the spherical top of the yurt are covered with colored felts, which are held in position by broad bans of neatly-embroidered wool. All round the foot of the circular wall lie bundles of felt rugs and bags of spare clothes, evidently stored for a more rigorous season. A screen of reeds, covered with woolen thread worked in delicate colors and bold but pleasing pattern, separated a little segment of the yurt apparently reserved for the lady of the house, who again and again dived into it, to return with cups and other more precious implements. The floor all round, except in the center where the fire blazed, was covered with felts and thick rugs made of yak's hair; for my special accommodation a gay-colored Andijan carpet was spread on one side. The warm milk, which was offered from the cauldron by the presiding matron, tasted sweet and rich. I had it presented in a large Chinese cup, while the rest of the company, which comprised over a dozen of the *Beg's* male relatives and neighbors, helped themselves from a number of bowls in wood and iron. Milk is a staple article of food with the Kirghiz, and the healthy look of the men around me, young and old, showed how well it agrees with them.

Towards the end of my visit Karm Shah Beg produced a big sheep that I was to accept as a token of hospitality and goodwill. I should gladly have taken a smaller one, since for weeks past I had occasion to notice that the sheep which my men selected for purchase were as distinguished for toughness as for size. Karim Shah Beg, however, had different notions on this point, and was not to be denied. So I consoled myself with the thought that at least there would be satisfaction among my men. The Kirghiz are a matter-of-fact people, with a keen eye for money. Hence I did not fail to assure my host that his present would be returned by more than its equivalent in value before I left the valley.

9. FOOD IN CENTRAL ASIA

(Kasia, N. and S. Natsagdorj, Socio Economic Development: Food and Clothing In Eastern Iran and Central Asia, in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia* volume IV, edited by M.S. Asimov and C.E. Bosworth, UNESCO Publishing, 1998, p. 381-188. Permission pending)

People say that "You are what you eat." The following article demonstrates this by describing the variety of foodstuffs on the crossroads of Inner Asia's settlements. The food is as varied as the people. Yet, it is characterized by the unique features of the region. The dry and hot climate, prevailing Muslim religion, and semi-nomadic lifestyle all contribute to the cuisine.

The accounts of Islamic geographers mention the existence of markets and the varied products of the cities. Khurasan, for example, is described as a region with good weather, fertile land, green plains, numerous sheep, delicious fruit, and a wide variety of foodstuffs. With its markets and bazaars of shoemakers, drapers, craftsmen and so on, Nishapur was well known as a commercial center and had every sort of fruit, vegetable, cereal, meat and bread. Tabaran, the district's main town, was famous for its abundance of fruit and cheap food. Abiward gained recognition for its fertile soil and other blessings and Khawaran was known for its salted meat. Balkh was considered incomparable among the Persian cities: all kinds of fruit (including citrus fruit and grapes), cereals such as wheat, rice and barley, and walnuts. almonds and vegetables were grown there. Thus it was known as the granary of Khurasan and Khwarazm. Of the adjacent regions, Qumis was noted for its pomegranates, Damghan for its red apples, Sistan for its meat, fruit and saffron and Tabristan for its various kinds of fruit, grains and cereals, its wild birds and seafood, its pickles and jams.

Khwarazm, celebrated for its hospitable people, was also noted for its cuisine. The region had an abundance of fish oil, nuts, honey, *jujube*, large raisins, sesame and milk products (mainly a kind of cheese called *rabbin*), meat, frozen fish and a famous variety of watermelon, which was placed in ice-filled lead containers and exported as far as Baghdad and the caliphal court. The Khwarazmian *baranj* melon was famous for its sweetness and taste. As long as the caliph al-Mamun (813-33) lived in Khurasan, these melons were brought to him by courier. The dried melons of Merv were also well known and were exported, as were the dried plums of Khwarazm. Transoxania was famed as the only land that never faced famine. Its cotton, wool and silk cloth, and cloaks made out of fox, sable and grey squirrel fur, were exported to other countries. The district of Bukhara was so fertile that 1 acre was able to provide the livelihood of an entire family. Much of its agriculture depended on irrigation, by means of which rice, corn and much cotton was grown. Its sister city Samarkand was rebuilt and embellished after the Mongol devastations. The Spanish envoy Clavijo, who visited it at the beginning of the fifteenth century, during the time of Timur, praised it for its green fields, wide squares and extensive markets, full of a great variety of foods, including raw and cooked meats.

Staple foods

Staple items in the diet of the ordinary people included bread made with kneaded flour of wheat, barley, millet, maize or rice. Some parts of Khurasan, especially Merv, were noted for their bread. In addition to bread made from wheat flour, there was a type using flour, raisins and a mixture of fruit, that was exported to other regions. The most popular bread was made from wheat, as recommended by ancient physicians; barely bread was mainly the food of the deprived, and a sign of poverty.

The most commonly eaten meat in these regions was mutton. Alone or mixed with other foods, whether fresh or salted, it could be served cooked, grilled or broiled. As eating meat was not against the law, a great variety of domestic and wild animals were raised. In Turkistan, fish was a popular dish. Khwarazm was noted for its frozen fish, called *shargh*; Bukhara for its fresh and salted fish; Bayhaw for its plump poultry; Sarakhs for its camel meat; and Tabaristan for its numerous domestic and predatory animals and its great variety of poultry, wild birds and fish. The salted fish, *rubaytha*, was exported from Iraq to Khursan. Many people appreciated poultry such as chicken and pigeon; the rich served broiled pheasants and partridges at their parties. Chicken was also among the medicinal foods prescribed by doctors. It was quite common to breed hens, pigeons, partridges and many other birds for their eggs and flesh.

The Turks of the Central Asian steppes ate the meat from their sheep and from the wild animals they hunted, while the Mongols ate, both cooked and raw, the meat of various domestic and wild animals, including horses, donkeys, dogs, cats, pigs, wolves, foxes, snakes and rats. Both the meat and the milk of mares were considered excellent dishes. The Mongols sometimes cut the flesh of horses and sucked their blood in an emergency. Non-Muslims killed animals by spearing their chest and shoulders. The Great Khan Ogedey's enforcement of this law was so severe that no Muslim could slaughter an animal for four successive years.

A favorite dish consumed by all classes was *harisa*; it was prepared with fatty meat, rice, millet or husked wheat and sugar. Merv was known to have an especially good kind. Another favorite, *surkha-ba*, made with meat, crushed grain and vinegar, spread from Persia to Iraq, where it was popular and known as *sikbaj*. Bazmaward, another Persian dish, made with cooked meat, eggs and leeks rolled in a thin sandwich of bread, was supposedly popularized in Baghdad by the Persian Barmakids. Cheese and other milk products such as yoghurt were consumed everywhere.

Cooking flavorings and spices included pomegranate juice, sour grapes, dried lemons, lemon juice, vinegar and sour as well as sweet herbs; these were used in soups, various kinds of cooked rice and in cooked, grilled and broiled meat. Jams, pastries, candies, dates, rhubarb, pistachios, shelled almonds, walnuts, seeds and dried fruit were other items that either accompanied meals or were eaten together with dried nuts and seeds between meals. Edible earth found in Zuzan, Kuhistan and Nishapur was among the rare and valued products which were exported to distant places and offered at the courts of kings.

10. ORIGINS OF MUSIC IN TURKIC XINJIANG

(Du, Yaxiong, The Origin of the Music Systems of the Turkic Speaking Nationalities in Xinjiang, *Central Asiatic Journal*, Harrassowitz Verlag Pub. 42/2, p.165-179. Permission pending)

Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous region is the westernmost province of China. It is by far the biggest of the country's regions and provinces. The history of Xinjiang can be divided into two periods: the pre-Turkic period and Turkic period. During the 8th and 9th centuries, a large number of Turkic speaking Ouigurs, the ancestors of today's Uygurs, moved into the south of Xinjiang and after about 300 years (about the 11th century), the Turkic languages replaced the aboriginal local languages in both southern and northern Xinjiang. Now there are five Turkic speaking nationalities in Xinjiang. They are the Uygur, Uzbek, Kazak, Yjrgiz, and Tatar.

Folk Song Puzzle

Folk songs are the foundation of folk music. Folk songs are made of two parts: the text and the melody, and the melody must fit the text. Many musicologists believe that the folk music style of a nationality is linked with its language. This theory is well exemplified by Zoltan Kodaly, the well-known Hungarian musicologist. He wrote, "The development of Hungarian music, however, cannot have been different from that of the language... ...Whatever influenced the language was capable of influencing the music as well." Also, if several nationalities' languages belong to one language family, many musicologists think that their music styles should also be similar.

However, the situation is not as simple as that. Although the various Turkic languages spoken in Xinjiang belong to one language family being so similar that they can be mutually understandable there exist three different music systems, which are quite different from each other. Why is the music of the Turkic people in Xinjiang so widely divergent? This is a big puzzle, and it is the purpose of this study to advance a possible explanation. An in-depth examination into the history and the origin of these people will help us discover the limits of the relationship between language and music in Xinjiang.

Divergent Musical Systems

A musical system consists of the following four parts: (1.) Tonal structure; (2.) Combinational form of tones; (3.) Character of meter and rhythm; (4.) Special character of music texture.

According to the analyses of recordings and transcriptions of Chinese music, the music of the minorities in China fall into three musical systems: the Mongolian system, the Persian-Arabic system and the European system. The European system can be further subdivided into two different types: the eastern type and the western type. Let us see what characterizes these music systems.

a. The most important characteristic of the Mongolian system is the use of unfixed tones. The pitch of these tones move when they are played or sung.

Another important characteristic of the system is the use the ahemitonic (without semitones) pentatonic scales.

b. The characteristics of the Persian-Arabic system is the use of microtones, such as quarter-tones, and fixed rhythm patterns.

c. The European system is quite different from the Mongolian or the Persian-Arabic. It uses fixed tones and heptachordal modes, simple and compound times, and the three basic musical textures are monophony, polyphony and homophony. Although the eastern European type also uses heptachordal modes, many scales are different from the western European type. For example, the major in the western type is: do, re, mi, fa, sol, la and ti, but in the eastern type it is: do, re, mi, fa, sol, la and ti flat. The eastern type uses mixed bars and has no homophony and polyphony, the most important texture being monophony (Du and Chen 1993).

These three systems are noticeably different from each other, so much so that everybody can easily recognize them. The two distinct European types are also easily recognizable. In China, except for the five Turkic nationalities and the Indo-European speaking Russians and Tajiks living in Xinjiang, all the other nationalities' music (including the Turkic-speaking Yugur and Salar living in Gansu and Qinghai) belong to the Mongolian music system. Russians use the western European system. The Tajiks use the Persian-Arabic as well as the Mongolian system. However the music of the Turkic groups in Xinjiang have all three musical systems:

1. Except for the Uzbek, the four other nationalities use two or three different systems.

2. Each multi-system nationality has one major system. For the Uygur it is the Persian-Arabic system, for the Tatar it is Mongolian, and for the Kazak and Kirgiz it is the eastern European system.

3. The western European system is only used by Tatars.

There seems to be no relationship between religion and use of the Persian-Arabic system since there are only three nationalities who use the Persian-Arabic system and the other two do not, yet they are all believers of Isalm. There seems to be no relationship between living areas and the music system, either. The Persian-Arabic system and two different European systems are used by the people living in both south and north Xirdiang. The following are explanations for existence of three different music systems among the Turkic language speakers in Xinjiang.

The Origin of the Different Music Systems

There is a relationship between different music system and different ethnic elements in Xinjiang and its neighbouring areas of the pre-Turkic period. The Mongolian system is linked with the Mongoliod, the European system is linked with Proto-European and Pamir-Ferghana types, while the Persian-Arabic system is linked with the Eastern-Mediterranean physical types. In other words, certain ethnic groups that appeared in a specific area in the pre-Turkic period, can be linked to certain music systems used today. Now we can discuss why the Turkic language speaking people in Xinjiang use three different music systems. Each nationality has its own reason for using different systems.

Uygur: Both Uygur and Yugur are descendants of the ancient Ouigurs. According to my research the Yugurs have kept the ancient Ouigur music tradition until today. All of the Yugur folk music pieces use the Mongolian system. However, the percentage of pieces employing the Mongolian system is very low in Uygur folk music (5%), forming a sharp contrast to Yugur folk music. From this fact, it seems that the ancient Ouigur music tradition has been almost completely lost by the Uygurs. When the Ouigurs mixed with those people living in the south of Xinjiang after they moved into the area, they accepted and adopted those people's music heritage. Today the main system of Uygur music is the Persian-Arabic system since the aboriginal residents of southern Xinjiang before the Ouigurs came were mainly the Eastern Mediterranean ethnic types. The second system of Uygur music is the eastern European system since the other aboriginal residents were the Proto-European groups. The Uygurs' use of these two systems can prove that the music systems are linked with the

residents' ethnic makeup of the pre-Turkic period.

Kazak: The folk songs having the Mongolian system in Kazak folk music comprise about 15%, while 85% belong to the eastern European system. This ratio is the same as the proportion of Mongolian physical elements to the Pamir-Ferghan elements found in the ancient Wusun and Saka cemetery of Zhaosu. Again, this seems to suggest that music style is linked with the ethnic makeup of the ancestors.

Kirgiz: The human remains of a variant of the Proto-European types were found in the upper reaches of Ob, and Irtish, and Yenisey rivers. These areas were the homeland of the Kirgiz people. According to the Historical Book of the Tang Dynasty, "the Jiankun people are tall and have white hair, white skin and green eyes,". From these records we know that the major element of the ancestors of the Kirgiz were Europeans, so it is not surprising that the eastern European Music system predominates in their folk songs. As for the Persian-Arabic system apparent in their music today, it is the result of Uygur contact after the Kirgiz people moved into the south of Xinjiang.

Uzbek: As we know, the Eastern Mediterranean elements entered the South of Xinjiang from Central Asia. Anthropological studies showed that the ancestors of the Uzbek had this ethnic element and today they still use the Persian-Arabic music system.

Tatar: Although the ancestors of those Tatars who today live in Xinjiang came from Europe, ultimately their ancestors were ethnically Mongoloids. The Tatar was a tribe ruled by the nomadic Turkic Khanate in northern China during the Tang Dynasty. When the Mongols pushed west in the 12th century, many Central Asians and Europeans called them Tatars also. In the 15th century, the rulers of the Khazan Khanate, to boast of their strength, began calling themselves "Tatars, the sons of the Mongols," and "Tatar" gradually became the recognised name for the inhabitants of the Khazan Khanate. Today's Tatar ethnic group was formed through a mixture of the Bulgars, Kipchacks, and Mongolians over a long period. Today the major system of Tatar music is the Mongolian system, and the western European system is the borrowed element from Russian.

Conclusion

Ethnomusicology is a branch of musicology and of anthropology, therefore one of the duties of ethnomusicology should be to study as many anthropologically related aspects of music as possible. This includes not only cultural but also physical anthropological aspects. Xinjiang is one of the main areas of contacts and movements between the Eastern and Western groups of the Eurasian continent. It is also an important area of the ancient "Silk Road" going through Central Asia. Therefore, the music anthropological study of this area is essential in tracing the relationship between music and other aspects of anthropology. From our study, we can see that although according to our expectations the music of the Turkic nationalities in Xinjiang ought to fit their language, there is no such exact and exclusive relationship between language and music. Rather these data compel us to draw an important conclusion: as another human communication system, music is closely linked with the biological human being himself. In Xinjiang the various music styles are closely linked to the various human physical types. The exploitation of the possibilities of this type of approach can be the much needed bridge between cultural anthropology and physical anthropology.

11. WEATHER MAGIC IN INNER ASIA

(Adam Molnar, *Weather Magic in Inner Asia*, Bloomington: Indiana University, Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1994, pp. 84, 88. Permission pending)

The following are stories of the Central Asian Kipchak Turks based on 18th - 20th century accounts of travelers and missionaries. As the climate of Central Asia was hot and dry, rain helped people survive. Therefore the rain-making ceremony was very important.

According to the beliefs of the Kirghiz, weather can be changed or foreseen with the help of the jay-stone, in the stomachs of sheep and cows. Alternately a piece of ordinary stone the size of a finger can be transformed into jay-tas by forty days of prayer and a magical

procedure performed in water. A lost rain-stone may cause harm. Whoever finds it may be struck by poverty, illness and death. Therefore, a rain-stone is always carefully guarded by its owner, who might bury it in the ground when he feels death coming. An exclusive class of magicians, called *jayci*, specializes in doing weather-magic, though the *baksi* have also been known to perform the duties of a weather-magician. The Kirghiz believe that a *jayci*'s death is followed by heavy rainfalls. To stop the rains, an incision is made with the point of a knife in the weather-magician's stomach, some of his eyebrows and lashed are plucked out, and then the corpse itself is buried. A small fire is lit over the *jayci*'s grave, and the torn out eyebrows and lashes are thrown among the flames. It is believed that the rain will stop when the smoke reaches the sky. If the weather-magician is buried without performing the necessary rituals, or he happens to die while it is raining or snowing, his corpse is disinterred somewhat later, and the appropriate ceremony is performed. In some cases, the *jayci*'s body is not buried, but incinerated.

The *jayci* says a spell forty times over forty wishes, then he submerges them in water, and turns towards the four cardinal points repeated the spell forty times. He obtains a few clods of earth from a grave, and saying the spell forty times once again, throws the clods towards the sky. Finally, he himself dips into water, and while sitting in it, repeats the spell again forty times.

Rain Making Ceremony I

Before the ceremony the ritual ablution is obligatory; the appropriate prayers are to be recited from the Koran. The *yada* "rain-making ceremony" is performed by means of a dappled blue, yellow or reddish colored *yada-tas*, *yada*-stone, found in the intestines of animals, such as boars, horses, goats or even snow-leopards or lizards. There are certain indications of there being a *yada*-stone in an in animal. If, for example, a horse crosses rivers during the winter without stopping to drink, there is a *yada*-stone in its intestines. The best kind of rain-stone can be recognized by the cracking sound it gives, when cast into water. When the magical power of the yada-stone begins to wane, it should immediately be dipped in blood, or given to a red cock to swallow. After three days the cock can be killed, and the revitalized stone regained from its intestines. The same result can be obtained by giving it to an old he-goat to swallow. After an hour or so, the goat can be slaughtered and the *yada*-stone taken from its stomach. The stone is to be put on a plate, a red and a white cock killed over it, and the *yada*-stone immersed in the blood of cocks. However, it will not lose its power in the first place if it is wrapped into a blue piece of cloth, is kept in a humid place, or is fixed to the tail of a black horse.

The *yada*-ceremony itself takes place on the banks of a river, or in a secluded place. The rain-maker performs an ablution, then he prays to the saints of Islam, and recites the appropriate verses from the Koran. Afterwards, there follows the *yada*-ceremony itself. A black, white, or dappled *yada*-stone is fixed to horse-hair and hung into the river. The prayer continues: the rain-maker addresses the clouds, which he compares to white and skewbald sheep, and asks them to come over and bring rain.

Rain Making Ceremony II

Members of the Swedish Missionary Society also took notice of rain-making around Kashghar, Yengi Hissar and Yarkend.

If there is a severe drought a rain-maker is called in. Before he begins his task he has, in some solitary place or at a shrine, been reciting no less than 70,000 long prayers during 41 days. The magic performance of rain-making has to be witnessed by the eldest of the people. The magic is performed in the following way. The rain-maker brings a stone which has been found in the intestines of some animal and puts it into a vessel filled with the blood of some quadruped which has recently been slaughtered. This blood is stirred with the help of a whisk made of willow twigs. Meanwhile the rain-maker recites incantations. The time for the arrival of rain can be indicated, but usually the rain-maker reserves for himself two days of grace. If rain does not appear during this period he asks for a respite of eight days, during which time he prays day and night. If rain does not appear even then it means that the enemies of the rain-maker are working against him. They are able to prevent the rain through counteracting incantations. The rain-

makers make people pay well for their services. But if they fail completely it happens that they receive a well deserved punishment by the people who feel deceived. The same may happen if they procure too much rain. There are also wind-makers but they are not as important as rain-makers.

If there is no rain people go to the rain-makers, bringing them generous offerings, sometimes several *yambo* [i.e. a lump of silver], in order to have them procure rain. If the rain thus procured becomes too heavy it happens that people drag the rain-maker to the Chinese court. The mandarins then sentence him to a couple of hundred whiplashes and put him in the stocks for a couple of weeks. Some years ago two rain-makers were thus punished by the *Shen-guan* [i.e. by the chief of district].

12. EMPIRES AGAINST SLAVERY IN CENTRAL ASIA

(Karl E. Meyer & Shareen Blair Brysac, *Tournament of Shadows: The Great Game and the Race for Empire in Central Asia,* Counterpoint: Washington DC, 1999, pp. 122-123. Permission pending)

Slavery was a commerce, a sport, and a way of life in Khiva and Bokhara where the trade had flourished for centuries. It was said that Persian women fetched the highest prices for the harem, and that Russians made good workers, but the raiding itself – the alaman *– was an exciting incentive for traders. The diplomat Eugene Schuyler, the first American known to visit Bokhara, left us this description of what he saw in 1872:*

> Entering into a large *sarai*, we went upstairs into a gallery, and found several rooms, some of which were locked, and a number of slave – two little girls of about four years old, tow or three boys of different ages, and a number of old men – all Persians... The slaves were shown to me by an old Turkoman, who acted as a broker, and who told me that the market was rather dull just then, but that a large caravan would probably arrive in the course of a few days... I asked the price of one of the boys, a lively looking lad of fifteen, who had been stolen only five months before from near Astrabad... The first price asked was more than 1,000 *tengas*, which I gradually reduced to 850 *tengas*; the seller constantly dilating on the good points of the boy, what and excellent *jigit* [a skilled horseman] he would make, and so on, the bystanders joining in on one side or the other.

Schuyler asked the broker how he dared sell a Muslim as a slave when as a mullah he knew this was forbidden under Islamic law. "He is not a Musulman, he is only a Persian, a Kaffir," the Bokharan indignantly protested. "All Persians are Kaffirs [i.e. Shiites] and unbelievers." Haunted by the encounter, and despite attempts by officials, scenting trouble, to block the sale, Schuyler purchased and liberated the boy. Hussein returned with him to St. Petersburg, where he learned to read and write, and was eventually apprenticed to a Muslim clockmaker.

Doubtless a good deal of cant tainted Russian outrage over slavery. Edward Allworth, the doyen of American authorities on Central Asia, has dryly observed that Russian slave markets had long existed in Kiev, Kazan, Astrakhan and other cities, and that slavery was quietly tolerated as late as 1825. What most provoked Russian anger was less practice of slavery that the abduction and forced conversion of Christians by Muslims. Although grand scale slavery in Russian was abandoned as late as 1961 by Alexander II, the British widely understood Russian anger.

In 1838, to deprive Russians of a pretext for advancing southward, the British dispatched and emissary to persuade Turkestan's khans and emirs to abandon a repugnant commerce. The emissary, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Stoddart was denounced as a spy deserving execution. He was seized, shackled, and lowered into Bokhara's infamous bug-pit. Said to be inhabited by insects and rodents bred to prey upon terrified humans, the *Siyah Chah* was a filthy hole twenty-one feet deep, littered with bones and rotting flesh. What presumably spared Stoddart's life was news of British military success in Afghanistan.

THREE
How Did The Mongolian Conquest and Empire Influence Inner Asian History?

Western history has tended to "demonize" the Mongols, making their name synonymous with "horde" or invader. The alternate name which is often used for the Mongols is Hun. However, as we have become more aware of the huge influence the Mongols had on the history of the regions both to the west and the east of their native lands, we realize the need to reassess the role of the Mongols in world history. Aside from founding the Yuan Dynasty in China and making huge strides in consolidating the Chinese Empire, the Mongols were also converts to Islam and had a major interaction with Western Asia.

The readings in this section were selected to help teachers and students reconstruct their understanding of the Mongols. The readings allow an exploration of the Mongols from the European perspective as well as their own "secret history" which gives us another view of these people. Today, the Mongols have their own nation again, freed from the dominion of the Soviet Union. They are attempting to develop their nation along the historic principles of their forebearers, taking great pride in the heritage of Kubilia and Chinngis Khan. This beautiful land is considered by many an example of sustainable development as they continue to pursue their nomadic lifestyle in spite of 21st century advances.

MONGOLIAN CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

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1. ENVOYS' STORIES OF THE MONGOLS

(Bertold Spuler, *History of the Mongols: Based on Eastern and Western Accounts of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, translated by Helga and Stuard Drummond, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972, pp. 71-114. Reprinted with Permission. Copyright of the University of California Press.)

The most interesting and informative sources of European evidence on Mongolian history are the accounts of travelers and envoys to the Mongol Empire. Some of the specific accounts in the following article are taken from the reports of Friar William Rubrick's travels to Mongolia. He was sent by Louis IX of France, although he did not have an official status. Instead of being an ambassador, Rubrick traveled as a missionary. In his travels he reached Qaraqorum and had meetings with the then Great Khan, Mongke, who had seized the throne in 1251 AD.

The Mongols in the Eyes of the Europeans: The Good Characteristics of the Tartars

In the whole world there are to be found no more obedient subjects than the Tartars, neither among lay people nor among the monks; they pay their lords more respect than any other people, and would hardly dare lie to them. Rarely if ever do they revile each other, but if they should, the dispute never leads to blows. Wars, quarrels, the infliction of bodily harm, and manslaughter do not occur among them, and there are no large-scale thieves or robbers among them. Consequently their *ordas* and the carts in which they keep their treasures are not secured by either locks or bolts. If any animal goes astray, the finder either leaves it to its fate or takes it to those persons who are expressly appointed for this purpose. The owner of the lost animal makes his inquiries to them and has it returned to him without further difficulty.

They treat one another with due respect; they regard each other almost as members of one family, and although they do not have a lot of food, they like to share it with one another. Moreover, they are accustomed to deprivation; if, therefore, they have fasted for a day or two, and have not eaten anything at all, they do not easily lose their tempers, but sing and enjoy themselves as though they had eaten a superb meal. While riding they can endure extreme cold and at times also fierce heat; they are neither soft, nor sensitive [to the weather]. They do not seem to feel in any way envious of one another, and no public trials occur among them. No one holds his fellow in contempt, but each helps and supports the other to the limit of his abilities.

Their woman are chaste, and nothing is ever heard of any immodesty among them. Nevertheless

jokingly they will use rather shameful and immodest words. It is said, mutiny rarely if ever takes place. And although they get drunk frequently, they do not either quarrel or fight in their drunkenness.

Their Bad Characteristics

They are extremely arrogant toward other people and look down on all others with disdain. In fact, they regard them, both noble and humble people alike, as little better than nothing. We observed at the Court of their Great Khan, that they showed a lack of proper respect to such as the Grand Duke of Russia who surely is a noble man, and also to the son of the King and Queen of Georgia as well as to many mighty sultans. On the contrary, those Tatars who were instructed to attend upon them, even if they were of extremely low station, would always precede them and take the first and foremost position; frequently the visitors would have to sit behind their backs. Toward other people the Tatars tend to anger and are easily roused. They are the greatest liars in the world in dealing with other people and hardly a true word escapes from their mouths. Initially they flatter, but in the end they sting like scorpions. They are crafty and sly, and wherever possible they try to get the better of everybody else by false pretenses. If they intend some mischief against others they have an admirable ability to keep their intentions secret, so that others cannot take any precautions or countermeasures against their clever plans.

They are messy in their eating and drinking and in their whole way of life. Drunkenness is honorable among them; when anyone among them has drunk too much he will be sick on the spot, but even so will carry on drinking again. At the same time they are mean and greedy, and if they want something, they will not stop begging and asking for it, until they have got it. They cling fiercely to what they have, and in making gifts they are extremely miserly. They have no conscience about killing other people. In short, if one tried to enumerate all their bad characteristics there would be too many to put on paper.

Their Way of Life and Their Dwellings

They (the Mongols) set up the dwelling in which they sleep on a circular frame of interlaced sticks converging into a little round hoop on the top, from which projects above a collar as a chimney, and this they cover over with white felt. Frequently they coat the felt with chalk, or white clay, or powdered bone, to make it appear whiter, and sometimes they made the felt black. The felt around this collar is decorated with various pretty designs. And they make these houses so large that they are sometimes thirty feet in width. I myself once measured the width between the wheel tracks of a cart twenty feet, and when the house was on the cart it projected beyond the wheels on either side five feet at least. I have myself counted twenty-two oxen drawing one house. The axle of the cart was as large as the mast of a ship, and one man stood in the entry of the house on the cart driving the oxen. In the front end they make a little doorway; and then they cover this little house with black felt coated with tallow or ewe's milk so that the rain cannot penetrate it, and they decorate it with embroidery work. And in such little houses they put all their bedding and valuables, and they tie them tightly on high carts drawn by camels, so that they can cross rivers. Such coffers they never take off the cart.

When they set down their dwelling houses, they always turn the door to the south, and after that they place the carts with the coffers on either side near the house at a half stone's throw, so that the dwelling stands between two rows of carts as between two walls. They set up the couch of the master on the north side. The side for the women is always on the left of the couch of the master... The side for the men is on the right. Men coming into the house would never hang up their bows on the side of the women. And over the head of the master is always an image of felt, like a doll or statuette, which they call the brother of the master; another similar one is above the head of the mistress, which they call the brother of the mistress, and they are attached to the wall; and higher up between the two of them is a little lank one, who is, as it were, the guardian of the whole dwelling. The matrons make for themselves most beautiful carts, which I would not know how to describe to you unless by a drawing, and I would depict them all to you if I knew how to paint. A single rich Mongol or

Tatar has quite a hundred or two hundred such carts with coffers. Batu (a person's name) has twenty-six wives, each of whom has a large dwelling, exclusive of the other little ones which they set up after the big one, and which are like closets, in which the sewing girls live, and to each of these dwellings are attached two hundred carts.

Food

Of their food and victuals you must know that they eat all their dead animals without distinction, and many animals die. Nevertheless, in summer, so long as their *comos* lasts (mare's milk), they care not for any other food. So then if it happens that an ox or a horse dies, they dry its flesh by cutting it into narrow strips and hanging it in the sun and the wind, where at once and without salt it becomes dry without any evil smell. With the intestines of horses they make sausages better than pork ones, and they eat them fresh. The rest of the flesh they keep for winter. With the hides of oxen they make big jars which they dry in admirable fashion in the smoke. With the hind part of the hide of horses they make most beautiful shoes. The flesh of a single sheep they give to eat to fifty men or a hundred; for they cut it up very fine in a platter with salt and water, for they make no other sauce; and then with the point of a knife or a fork which they make for the purpose, like that which we use to eat coddled pears or apples, they give to each of the bystanders a mouthful or two according to the number of the guests.

Prior to this, before the flesh of the sheep is served, the master takes what pleases him; and furthermore if he gives to anyone a special piece, it is the custom that he who receives it shall eat it himself, and he may not give it to another; but if he cannot eat it all he carries it off with him, or gives it to his servant if he be present, who keeps it; otherwise he puts it away in a square bag which they carry to put such things in, in which they store away bones when they have not time to gnaw them well, so that they can gnaw them later and that nothing of the food is lost.

And when they have come together to drink, they first sprinkle with liquor an image which is over the master's head, then the other images in order. When the master takes the cup in hand and is about to drink, he first pours a portion on the ground. If he were to drink seated on a horse, he first before he drinks pours a little on the neck or the mane of the horse. Then they drink all around, and sometimes they do drink right shamefully and gluttonously. And when they want to challenge anyone to drink, they take hold of him by the ears, and pull so as to distend his throat, and they clap and dance before him.

Fashion

Of their clothing and customs you must know, that from China and other regions of the east, and also from Persia and other regions of the south, are brought to them silken and golden stuffs and cloths of cotton, which they wear in summer. From Russia and other countries to the north, are brought to them costly furs of many kinds, which I never saw in our parts, and which they wear in winter. And they always make in winter at least two fur gowns, one with the fur against the body, the other with the fur outside exposed to the wind and snow; these latter are usually of the skins of wolves or foxes and while they sit in the dwelling they have another, lighter one. The poor make their outside [gowns] of dog and kid [skins].

The men shave a square on the tops of their heads, and from the front corners [of this square] they continue the shaving to the temples, passing along both sides of the head. They shave also the temples and the back of the neck to the top of the cervical cavity, and the forehead as far as the crown of the head, on which they leave a tuft of hair which falls down to the eyebrows. They leave the hair on the sides of the head, and with it they make tresses which they plait together to the ears.

And the dress of the girls differs not from the costume of the men, except that it is somewhat longer. But on the day following her marriage [a woman] shaves the front half of her head, and puts on a tunic as wide as a nun's gown, but everywhere larger and longer, open before, and tied on the right side. Furthermore they have a headdress, made of bark, or such other light material,

and it is big and as much as two hands can span around, and is high and square like the capital of a column... So it is that when several ladies are riding together, and one sees them from afar, they look like soldiers, helmets on head and lances erect... And all the women sit their horses astraddle (stride) like men. And the women are wonderfully fat, and she who has the least nose is held the most beautiful. They disfigure themselves horribly by painting their faces. They never lie down in bed when having their children.

Marriage

As to their marriages, you must know that no one among them has a wife unless he buys her; so it sometimes happens that girls are well past marriageable age before they marry, for their parents always keep them until they sell them... Among them no widow marries, for the following reason: they believe that all who serve them in this life shall serve them in the next, so as regards a widow they believe she will always return to her first husband after death... When anyone has made a bargain with another to take his daughter, the father of the girl gives a feast, and the girl flees to her relatives and hides there. Then the father says: "Here, my daughter is yours: take her wheresoever you find her." Then he [the bridegroom] searches for her with his friends till he finds her, and he must take her by force and carry her off with a semblance of violence to his house.

Ritual at Death

When anyone dies, they lament with loud wailing, then they are free, for they pay not taxes for the year. And if anyone is present at the death of an adult, he may not enter the dwelling for the year. If it be a child who dies, he may not enter it for a month. Beside the tomb of the dead they always leave a tent if he be one of the nobles. Of him who is dead the burying place is not known. And always around these places where they bury their nobles there is a camp with men watching the tombs. I did not understand that they bury treasures with their dead. They make also pyramids to the rich, that is to say, little pointed structures, and in some places I saw great tiled, covered towers, and in others stone houses, though there were no stones thereabout. Over a person recently dead I saw hung on long poles the skins of sixteen horses, four facing each quarter of the world; and they had placed also *qumys* for him to drink, and meat for him to eat.

Justice

As to their justice you must know that when two men fight together no one dares to interfere, even a father dare not aid a son but he who has the worse of it may appeal to the court of the lord, and if anyone touches him after the appeal, he is put to death. But action must be taken at once without delay, and the injured one must lead him [who has offended] as a captive. They inflict capital punishment on no one unless he be taken in the act or confesses. When one is accused by a number of persons, they torture him so that he confesses. They punish homicide with capital punishment, and also cohabiting with a woman not one's own. By not one's own I mean not his wife or bondwoman, for with one's slaves one may do as one pleases. They also punish with death grand larceny, but as for petty thefts, such as that of a sheep, so long as one has not repeatedly been taken in the act, they beat him cruelly, and if they administer a hundred blows they must use a hundred sticks. I speak of the case of those beaten under order of authority. In like manner false envoys, that is to say persons who pass themselves off as ambassadors but who are not, are put to death. Likewise sorcerers, of whom I shall however tell you more, for such they consider to be witches.

2. HOW THEY MAKE COMOS AND ANIMALS THEY EAT

(From Peter Jackson and David Morgan, *The Mission of William of Rubrick*, London: The Hakluyt Society, 1990, pp.81-87. Permission pending.)

How they make Comos

They stretch above the ground a long rope between two stakes stuck in the soil, and around the third hour [nine o'clock] tether to the rope the foals of the mares they intend to milk. Then the mares stand beside

their foals and let themselves be milked peacefully. In the event of any of them proving intractable, one man takes the foal and puts it underneath her to let it suck a little, and then withdraws it while the milker takes its place.

Once a great quantity of milk is collected, it is poured into a large skin or bag and then churned with a club which is made for this purpose, as thick at the lower end as a man's head and hollowed out. As they stir it rapidly, it begins to bubble like new wine and to turn sour or ferment, and they keep churning it until they extract the butter.

Next they taste it, and when it is moderately pungent they drink it. While one is drinking it, it stings the tongue... but after one has finished drinking it leaves on the tongue a taste of milk of almonds. It produces a very agreeable sensation inside and even intoxicates those with no strong head; [p. 99 The friar's response to the first time he tasted it: That evening the fellow who was our guide gave us *comos* to drink, and on swallowing it I broke out in a sweat all over from alarm and surprise, since I had never drunk it before. But for all that I found it very palatable, as indeed it is.] it also markedly brings on urination.

Besides this, *caracomos* – that is, black *comos* – is made for the great lords, in the following way. Mare's milk does not curdle. For it is a rule that when no remnant is found in the belly of an animal's young, that animal's milk does not curdle: and since it is not found in a foal's where everything solid in it sinks straight to the bottom, like the dregs of wine, and what is clear remains on top and resembles whey. The dregs are very white, and are given to the slaves: they are highly soporific. The clear part the lords consume, and it is certainly a really delightful drink and fairly potent.

The Animals They Eat, And The Way They Hunt

The great lords own villages to the south, from which millet and flour are brought to them for the winter. The poor provide for themselves by dealing in sheep and skins. The slaves fill their bellies with dirty water, and with that rest content. They also catch mice, of which there are a great diversity and a plentiful supply. They do not eat mice with long tails, which they give to their birds instead; dormice they consume, and every kind of mice with short tails. In addition, there are plenty of marmots there, which in those parts they call *sogur* and of which in winter twenty or thirty at a time collect in one hole and sleep for six months: of these they catch a great number... They have many other little creatures besides which are good to eat and which they are quite able to tell apart.

They have an abundance of *ger-falcons*, which they uniformly carry on the right hand, and they always put a little thong round the falcon's neck which hangs down to the middle of his chest: when they cast him at the prey, they use this with the left hand to hold the falcon's head and chest at a downward angle, so that he is not hurled back by the wind or carried upwards.

They obtain a large proportion of their food by the chase. When they intend to hunt wild animals, they gather in great numbers and surround the area where they know wild beasts are to be found, gradually converging until the animals are enclosed in the middle in a kind of circle; then they shoot them with their arrows.

3. FOOD, DRESS AND CRAFTS OF THE MONGOLS

(Kasia, N. and S. Natsagdorj, Socio Economic Development: Food and Clothing In Eastern Iran and Central Asia, in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia* volume IV, edited by M.S. Asimov and C.E. Bosworth, UNESCO Publishing, 1998, p. 381-388. Permission pending)

Food and Diet of the Mongols

When Ibn Battuta visited the court of the Khans of the Golden Horde in Khwarazm in the fourteenth century, the dishes were as follows: broiled chicken, crane, young pigeons, a kind of buttered bread called *kelicha* or *kak*, and sweet paste; there were also many kinds of fruit, such as grapes, excellent melons and pomegranates, served in silver as well as gold containers.

The Mongol way of eating was crude. At parties and receptions everyone was given a slice of meat

which was eaten without being cut – cutting meat was not allowed, even when it was offered to a guest by the host. The left-over meat was kept, inside a skin, for use at the next meal. Meal times were usually as follows: breakfast in the morning, lunch at noon and supper in the early evening, to allow the food to be digested before sleeping. People were advised to eat warm food only twice a day in order to keep fit and healthy.

Contemporary works on ethics describe the correct manners when eating. They include washing one's hands and saying *bismallah al-hamdu lillah* before and after every meal; stopping eating before one is stuffed; beginning and ending a meal with some salt; taking small pieces of bread from a dish, taking care to chew them well; not opening one's mouth wide, not licking one's fingers; and sipping water rather than drinking it all at once. People were expected to eat in a happy mood, to speak of topics of common interest and to talk about righteous people, rather than remaining silent. Attending parties without invitation, going towards the table, looking at friends and at the dishes while eating, leaving the table before the dishes have been collected, and a host ending his meal before his guests, were all considered impolite. Regarding the order of courses at the end of a meal, fruit was eaten first, as physicians considered it better for the digestion, then pastries; and finally cold water was drunk.

Dress

The oldest piece of silk from this region dating back to the Islamic era, now to be found in the Louvre in Paris, belongs to the Samanid period and was woven c. 985 for a ruler in Khurasan. White robes and other silk articles of clothing, together with precious head coverings, were among the tribute sent from Khurasan to the court of Harun al-Rashid (786-809 AD) in Baghdad. The successors of Chinggis Khan wore gold-woven robes; the Mongols' dress had previously consisted mainly of animal skins. Soon afterwards they took to a sack-like garment that was loose on the left side; the right side was tied at the shoulder.

Most *il Khanid* dignitaries in Persia wore furs and leather hats. Ghazan Khan gave orders for turbans to be worn, on religious grounds, but was unsuccessful in enforcing this measure. Mongol women wore long trousers under their sack-like garments and tall, basket-like hats covered with a piece of cloth. In an attempt to curb the noble's luxurious lifestyle, the *il Khan* Gaykhatu forbade the wearing of gold-woven garments. Nevertheless, dignitaries wore new robes at parties and festivities. The furs of sables, grey squirrels, ermines and other animals were essential materials for the garments of the Mongols and the Turks of the steppes. At his birthday festivities, the Great Khan Qubilay donned gold-woven garments; 20,000 of his courtiers attended the ceremony, wearing golden and brightly colored garments made of costly silk ornamented with pearls and gold. Timur, however, wore a plain silk robe and a long white hat with a Badakhshan ruby on its top, surrounded by precious pearls and jewels.

During the ninth century, great merchants wore the *taylasan* (a headshawl whose end did not fall below the chin). The lower classes, however, did not wear this garment. Cooks wore garments resembling boiler-suits, servants carried napkins and towels, water carriers wore short trousers, meat-roasters wore a loincloth or napkin, while traders and artisans wore loose-fitting garments and farmers wore thick cotton dresses and colorful turbans. *Muhtasibs* (municipal inspectors) watched over the type and the state of cleanliness of craftsmen's dress.

Crafts

The abundant metal deposits in the Mongol lands encouraged the development of a knowledge of the physical properties of ores and metals and the skill of processing them for specific purposes, attested by literary and archaeological finds. The results of the excavations at Karakorum and other Mongol settlements confirm the existence of specifically Mongol crafts and trades, including the casting of iron and bronze; other workshops were principally concerned with the production of various types of weaponry. The stamped bronze ware, silverware, ornaments from horses' harnesses and bronze mirrors found at Karakorum testify to the skill of the Mongol smiths, metalworkers and jewelers. The high level of metal production there is confirmed by the technical analysis of some of the articles found; analysis of samples of white cast iron and

steel shows that the white iron melted at a temperature of 1350 degrees. Experts believe that it would have been impossible to achieve this temperature by hand-operated bellows; a motor force would have been necessary, and was probably provided by water power reaching Karakorum from the Orkhon river.

In terms of their development, Mongol crafts and trades may largely be described as a dependent sector of the Mongols' economic activity, on the level of cottage industry. Given their economic system, the herders generally only made products and household items to meet the vital requirements of their nomadic life. The various products obtained from the livestock long remained the principal raw material for the craft industries. Sheep's wool was used to manufacture felt; belts, harnesses, various types of vessels, clothing, headgear and footwear were made from the skins of domesticated livestock.

The making of clothing required particular skills, such as the ability to process the hides and manufacture thread and a knowledge of stitching techniques. The Mongols' main item of clothing was the *deli*, a robe with seamless shoulders. Mongolian *delis* of the tenth to the thirteenth century were very different from the modern versions. Collarless and open from top to bottom, they wrapped over at breast level and fastened with three clasps on the right and a single clasp on the left, where they were slit as far up as the sleeve. Married women wore a kind of *kaftan* that was extremely wide and slit in front down to the ground; they also wore a headdress known as a *bogtog*. Mongols in the thirteenth century, as now, wore a soft material belt wrapped tightly around the waist. A belt of this sort served as a kind of unstiffened corset, to make long journeys on the hard Mongol saddles more bearable and to help riders maintain their posture.

Differences in the finish, style and quality of materials were apparent in the clothing of the rich and the poor. Rich people wore clothes made of silk and wool and expensive furs brought from various foreign countries. They lined their robes with silk floss, which is extremely soft, light and warm. The poor made their heavy outer coats from dog or goat skins, lining their clothing with linen or cotton. They used felt to make cloaks, saddle-cloths and rain hats.

The footwear of the Mongol peoples had a number of characteristic features; the cut and assembly were common to all groups. Mongol boots (tenth to the eleventh century) had tops which enclosed the entire shin and were the same width at top and bottom. The sole was thick and inflexible with felt padding. The rigid toe was turned upwards. This boot was designed specifically for standing in stirrups and riding in a hard saddle at a quick gallop.

Thus the Mongols' traditional clothing was influenced by the nomadic population's adaptation to the natural environment. It fulfilled its principal utilitarian function; it was simple, and it provided excellent protection from the sharp variations in temperature, from the wind and from the large number of insects which were always present around the livestock as they grazed.

4. MUSIC, DANCE AND DRAMA IN MONGOLIA

(Sechin Jagchi, and Paul Hyer, *Mongolia's Culture and Society*, Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1979, pp.236-243. Permission pending)

Music

Music, like virtually every other phase of Mongolian culture, is greatly influenced by the nomadic life of the people. Musical instruments and orchestras have existed since early times, but continual migrations have made it very difficult to bring together and maintain enough talent to have well-institutionalized orchestras or instrumental groups. For the most part, therefore, solo instrumentation has dominated Mongolian music.

Chinese records note that the *hu-ch'in* (Mongolian *khuur*), a stringed instrument common among the northern nomadic peoples, as well as the *p'i-pa*, a stringed instrument plucked by hand, originated among the nomads and then spread to China. On the other hand, many musical instruments were exported to the northern steppes, indicating a mutual cultural exchange with the nomads. Mongolians have also adopted many musical compositions from China over the centuries, but in so doing have introduced changes

or variations. Naturally, there are numerous native compositions.

The most common instrument among the Mongols is the *mori-yin khuur*, which is about three feet long with a small box at the base and a long neck fitted with horsehair strings; it is played with a bow to produce a quite low, bass sound.

It is common on occasions of feasting and festivities to assemble an orchestra of stringed instruments to accompany vocalists. Formal pieces are often rendered by a vocal soloist who alternates with a chorus. If the program is not performed by a combined orchestra, soloist, and chorus, a vocal soloist is accompanied by the *mori-yin khuur* or by a person, who, without an instrument, emits a low bass sound that functions as an accompaniment and is called a *chor*. In contrast to Chinese music, which is generally restricted to melody, Mongolian music uses harmony in a duet, which seems to be a natural result of a nomadic environment in which instruments are few and difficult to transport.

Spontaneous singing has long been characteristic of Mongolian society. The women of the house will frequently sing to entertain guests. Also, young people commonly sing, hum, or whistle as they gallop over the steppe on horseback. There are many folk songs, which may be divided into four categories: 1) songs about nature and the countryside; 2) songs expressing joy, lamentation, or other strong feelings; 3) songs or chants of popular folk heros and their exploits; and 4) songs of romance and love.

History in a Song

An old folk song popular in the late 1800s that still lingers in the minds of older Inner Mongolian adults is *Seng-wang-yin Daghan* ("The Song of Prince Senggerinchin"), which praises the exploits of the great Mongol general who supported the Manchu-Ch ing when they were hard pressed by the great T'ai-p'ing Rebellion (1850-64) spreading from South China. This song was particularly popular in Chakhar and eastern Mongolia where Senggerinchin recruited his troops. While lauding the conscription, martial acts, and heroic exploits against the *ch'ang-mao* ("long hair ones"-meaning rebels), the song shows a singular lack of nationalism. The novelist Injannashi criticized the general for fighting Chinese battles rather than using his troops to promote Mongolian interests.

One of the most popular old folk songs, arising in Inner Mongolia in the first decade of this century when Mongolia was troubled by Manchu and Chinese officials, was about the famous hero Toghtokhu Taiji. One can see in it a rising Mongol national consciousness, but the content is mainly about the *baatur* ("hero"), the brave deeds of the nobleman Toghtokhu against treacherous and corrupt Chinese officials.

The revolution in Outer Mongolia (1921) and the establishment of the Mongolian People's Republic (1924) were important influences on the music of Inner Mongolia, which was forced to remain within the Chinese sphere in spite of its greater population and larger territory. A very popular song with a fast, catchy tune, but rather nonsensical content, was "Yanjuar" ("Cigarette"). Pipes had been traditional, but cigarettes became symbols of change and of life in a revolutionary era.

In the 1930s, a rapid rise of nationalistic songs in Inner Mongolia was concurrent with political activity and the movement for autonomy. One outstanding song was *Arban Tumen* ("The Hundred Thousand"), popularly referred to as the *Chinggis Khan Marching Song*. Its origin is unknown, but there is a common, though mistaken, notion that it comes from the old days of the empire. The song, rather heroic and militant in tone and reminiscent of ancient imperial glory, was informally adopted by the Koke-khota (Hohehot) regime and later the Kalgan Mongolian government as a sort of national anthem to be sung on special occasions.

A similar song, current in the 1930s and 1940s, was the *Köke Taugh* ("Blue Banner"). It seems to have been an adaptation of *Red Flag*, a revolutionary song from the neighboring Mongolian People's Republic, and it was frequently sung by Mongolian troops and the more radically inclined youth.

Many modern, Russian-influenced songs swept

into the Mongolian People's Republic and then into Inner Mongolia after the collapse of Japan's expansion in northeastern Asia. Currently, the Chinese Communists have adopted old, popular Mongol music, but have rather skillfully adapted its content so that it praises Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the People's Liberation Army.

Court Music

The music and ritual of the Mongolian emperors of China is treated in the Monograph on Ritual and Music in the *Yuan shih*. It is recorded that in the early years of his reign, Chinggis Khan (T'ai-tsu, 1206-1227 AD) accepted the advice of his Tangut adviser, Kao Chih-yiieh, and adopted into his court ritual the music of the Tangut (Hsi-Hsia). Later, during the reign of Ogodei Khan (1238), a descendant of Confucius in the fiftieth generation, Hung Yuan-tso, reported to the khan that the court music of the former Jurchen-Chin dynasty was being scattered and lost and that it should be preserved. The khan agreed and appointed him to take charge of the enterprise and to establish a center for the dynasty's music and ritual at Tung-p'ing in present-day Shantung province. On the advice of certain Chinese advisers and in order to preserve the court music (*ya-yueh*) of the Southern Sung dynasty that he had earlier defeated, Khubilai gathered the musicians and performers of this school or tradition at Khanbalic (1282).

The Yuan dynastic history also discusses various musical instruments used at court at the time. Included were several non-Chinese instruments. One, an "instrument of flourishing sounds" (*hsing-lungsheng*), was a wind organ with ninety pipes and a bellows played by several men, which was given to the Mongol khan as a tribute by western Asian Moslems around 1260. A second instrument, identified as a "wooden peacock" (*mu-k'ung-ch'ueh*), was decorated with peacock feathers that were actuated when the instrument was played. A third instrument, a stringed guitar or *p'i-pa*-like item, was identified as an *huopu-ssu*. The *hu-chin*, a two-stringed instrument with a long neck decorated on the end with a carved wooden dragon head, was played with a horsehair bow. This can be identified as the modern *mori-yin khuur* of the Mongols.

The orchestras described in the history include a liturgical group (*shuo-fa-tuei*, referring to its involvement in the preaching of the Law of the Buddha), whose function was to play the "music of the golden lettered sutra of Tibet (Hsi Fan)." Mongolian court music, thus, was a cosmopolitan mixture that included Mongolian, Chinese, western Asian, Tangut-Tibetan, and some Jurchen elements.

Dance

The Mongols have various forms of dance (all referred to as *bujig*), including folk dancing and social dancing involving males and females dancing together or separately, accompanied by instruments. In modern times, there was very little folk dancing among the Mongols until it was recently revived in the Mongolian People's Republic. An exception to the decline of traditional folk dances among most Mongol tribes is found among the Torghud, a branch of the Oirad or Kalmuck Mongols, who have many dances, the most famous being a popular chopstick dance. Many of these Torghud dances have been perpetuated for hundreds of years, while others seem to have been stimulated by contact with Turkic peoples.

The medieval observer Rubruck noted that "when it is a big feast they are holding, they all clap their hands and also dance to the sound of the instrument, the men before the master and the women before the mistress." The earliest Chinese reference to Mongolian dance is found in a discussion in the Monograph on Ritual and Music of the *Yuan shih* regarding activities carried out in the ancestral temple of the Mongol khans at Khanbalic (Peking). The record is detailed, but it is unclear whether the dance and music were Mongolian, Chinese, or a mixture of the two. Much of the ritual carried out in the temple involved both Mongolian shamans and Chinese participants, so one may speculate that the dance and music in question were also a combination of the two cultural traditions.

The observances in the ancestral temple were commissioned by Khubilai Khan, and in 1275, a special military ritual dance was inaugurated that reviewed the glorious exploits of his forefathers from Chinggis to Mongke Khan. The first stage depicted the defeat of the

Kereyid Ong Khan. The second stage was the crushing of the Tangut (Hsi-Hsia), followed by a portrayal of the conquest of the Jurchen-Chin. The fourth stage was the occupation of the "western lands" (West Asia and Europe) and the pacification of Honan (the region south of the Yellow River). The fifth stage of the dance pageant was the conquest of western Sichuan and the pacification of the old Thai state of Nanchao. A sixth stage depicted the subduing of Korea and Vietnam.

Drama

There is no evidence of any form of dramatic productions being presented in Mongolian society prior to or during the early empire period. It is difficult to develop institutionalized drama in a nomadic society. There must have been some form of drama in the great capital of Karakorum, but there is no record of any. However, with the consolidation of the empire, contact with foreign peoples, and the establishment of brilliant courts, notably Khanbalic (now Peking), the situation changed.

An important form of entertainment, particularly for Mongolian nobility during the Yuan dynasty, was the *ch'u* or Yuan drama, which was developed by vulgarizing earlier Chinese forms and substituting many Mongolian words and phrases. It was designed for the pleasure of the Mongol elite who took great delight in viewing the theatrical productions. Later during the Manchu period, the forms evolved to become known as Peking opera. The term *shi* (Chs. *hsi*) came into the Mongolian language with the specific meaning of Peking opera. Mongolian influence continues in various forms, and, until recently, for example, a common item of terminology associated with Peking opera was the term *ch'ieh-mo*, which originally had no meaning in Chinese but which was taken from the Mongol word *chimeg* and refers to the scenery used in the drama. The Chinese use of the term is quite close to the original, but the Mongol word meant more specifically makeup, costumes, and stage hangings.

It is not possible to reconstruct the development of drama in Mongolia, but we know from old Mongol word lists or dictionaries that, even before contact with and influence from China, there was a form of drama referred to *jujuge*. While its origin is unknown, this theatrical form was apparently different from Chinese-influenced Peking opera. *Jujuge* was a form of play in a broad sense in that it had a number of subcategories. One school or tradition was derived from Tibet, imported by the lamas, and consisted mainly of didactic or religious plays, commonly presented in the monasteries on special occasions by the lamas. Although these forms existed among the nomads, the limitations on them were severe and their full development was retarded until the modem period when various new forms of the theatrical arts began to come in or to be revived.

Separate and distinct from the religious plays classified in premodern times as *jujuge* was a strictly religious theatrical form known as *cham*, originally a Tibetan word. The Mongols consider it a religious ceremony, but it takes the form of a play. *Cham* is actually a type of ritualistic dance-drama referred to in the West as "devil dance".

In Mongolia, *cham*, from the Tibetan word *'cham*, is a general term for Buddhist religious dance-dramas. There have been many kinds of *cham* performed in the great monasteries for centuries. In earlier days, in the Kharachin Right Banner and in the great monasteries at Dolonor, for instance, there were many different kinds of *cham* performed each year. The *cham* combines dance with music and the recital of Buddhist scriptures. The most popular cham, the one performed in the sixth month of the lunar calendar, commemorates the victory over the Tibetan king, Lang-dharma, who oppressed Buddhism in the tenth century and restored the Shamanistic Bon religion of Tibet. Eventually, the king, according to Tibetan history, was assassinated by a Buddhist monk.

The *cham* makes no attempt at historical accuracy. It relates, in a dramatic form of dance, that in the beginning there was peace and the people enjoyed life under the teachings of Buddhism; then the devils appeared and destroyed this peace. it was discovered by a great lama, Lobon-dayin, that the evil had been caused by an agent of Lang-dharma. consequently, he invited the spiritual protectors of the Buddhist law to

come down and defeat the evil spirits led by Chotjil, the king of hell. During the battle, in the drama, the evil spirits are encircled, and the protector of the law, masked as a deer, thrusts his horns into the encircled evil spirits and kills them, thus restoring peace again.

The music and the recital of scripture during the *cham* presentation greatly appeal to the Mongols, but its symbolic presentation is not limited to the memory of a victory against an evil king. it is also a prayer that all evil spirits in the contemporary world will be defeated by the forces of heaven and that peace will be forever established in the human world.

After Urga became a settled community, Chinese plays were introduced there and later elsewhere. Subsequently, during the latter part of the Ch'ing period, there were injunctions from the Ch'ing court in Peking forbidding the introduction of Chinese plays in Mongol areas. The ostensible reason was to protect the morality of the Mongols; however, the real reason seems to have been to restrict the introduction of Chinese influence into Mongolia, to keep the two peoples separate, and to perpetuate the ignorance of the Mongols. However, there was a strong countertendency in that the Mongol princes, who were required to present themselves annually or semiannually at court in Peking or Jehol, came into contact with Chinese opera and drama there. Their interest in these events naturally grew and soon, as the princes returned to their homes, they were introduced in various areas in Mongolia.

Mongols were not greatly attracted to Chinese *hsi* or operas. They attended out of curiosity, but they did not develop a strong interest. A notable development of Chinese-style drama in Inner Mongolia came only around the turn of this centry; examples are found in the Kharachin and Alashan areas. in both instances, the forms were introduced by the nobility and the common people were constrained to come to see the plays and to participate. Thus, one stream of drama developed with the introduction of Buddhism while a separate school developed concurrently with the growth of Chinese influence. Both forms of drama were popular until the Communist revolution.

The modern theater, opera, and other forms of dramatic production have had a remarkably flourishing development in the Mongolian People's Republic since its independence. In Inner Mongolia, during the 1930s and 1940s during the Japanese occupation, modern forms of theater and drama were introduced in parts of eastern and western Mongolia through schools and troops of young people. These had some propagandistic content and were often characterized by nationalistic political sentiments. They have been continued by the Chinese Communists with the same objective of manipulating the sentiments of the people. Most notable are the theatrical and musical groups known as *ulaan-mochi,* which tour the countryside to entertain the people.

5. WHERE THE SILK ROAD TOOK A DETOUR

(Rita Reif, *Where the Silk Road Took a Detour,* NY Times, 3/22/98. Permission pending.)

In the mid-1980's a wealth of medieval silk tapestries, brocades and embroideries were brought out of Tibet and sold in the West. As glorious as many of these textiles were, they baffled experts, who had no idea where they had been woven. The images of flowers, birds and mythic beasts suggested that they might be of Chinese origin. But there were also indications that the textiles had been made far from China, in places as distant as Baghdad. Now two experts, Anne E. Wardwell and James C. Y. Watt believe have solved the mystery. And the key is the Mongols.

Throughout most of the 13th and 14th centuries, the Mongols, a nomadic and warlike people, ruled much of China and Central Asia. "I had read about the migration of artists under Genghis Khan and his successors," said Mrs. Wardwell. "They would capture whole cities, kill most of the people, and save the craftsmen, shipping weavers from Iran to Central Asia and Mongolia in some cases and those from China as far west as Samarkand in others... The patterns of phoenix birds, lotus blossoms and dragons were so heavily influenced by the Mongol world that they have long been thought to be Chinese."

Then, in 1989, two pieces of gold and silver clothes arrived to the Clevland Museum of Art. One was full of images of winged lions with long tails looped around rosettes, which suggested that the cloth had been woven in Baghdad. The clouds that appear like shoulder pads on lions were typically Chinese, but their use in this way was not. Another textile from the same time period was emblazoned with eagles, dragons' heads and panthers, which also had tails looped around rosettes. "It wasn't until we saw these two silks together that the whole picture of the migration of artists under the Mongols came together. One was woven by artists sent east; the other by artists in the Iranian world."

6. WHY DID THEY LEAVE?

(These edited notes were taken from a lecture by Morris Rossabi, presented as part of the lecture series in conjunction with Mongolia: The legacy of Chinggis Khan, an exhibition at the Denver Art Museum. Reprinted with permission from the author.)

Why did the Mongols leave Mongolia in the first place and head both south and west if they had no intention of world domination?

First, the Mongols as nomadic peoples were dependent on trade with sedentary folk. The Mongols and other nomadic peoples had a fragile economy. They never accumulated a surplus because they couldn't carry a surplus. If their animals got diseased or killed or if the animals couldn't get grass because of a bad winter, the Mongols had no reserves. So they depended on trade with the Chinese to get grain and other products they needed. The Mongols didn't have much of an artisan class in this initial period. The Mongols needed trade to acquire the products made by artisans. The Chinese, on the other hand, didn't need things the Mongols provided so there was an inequitable economic relationship. In 1200 A.D. the dynasty that controlled Northern China reduced trade with the Mongols. The Mongols had to attack to survive.

The second explanation has to do with the climate. In 1974 a group of historical climatologists determined that from 1180 to 1290 the mean annual temperature of Mongolia declined, not a lot, but enough that the growing season was reduced. Less grass forced the Mongols to move. At that point Chinggis Khan began organizing the tribes. This was probably his greatest accomplishment. It is almost impossible to unite nomads because the optimal size of nomadic groups is a tribal unit. A tribe is relatively small to allow groups to find grass for their animals. It is very difficult to persuade tribes to come into a supra tribal group, a confederation, large enough to pose a challenge to a sedentary civilization. Chinggis Khan was able to do that. In 1206 all of Mongolia was under his rule. By the end of his life in 1227 he had conquered a limited territory. He was not the great conqueror but he fostered the Mongol Empire. It is really the second and third generations who expanded Mongol holdings.

MONGOLS' ACHIEVEMENTS AND HEROES

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1. THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS

(*The Secret History of the Mongols: The Origin of Chingis Khan*, an adaptation by Paul Kahn, Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company, 1998. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.)

The text of this adapted book was probably written down in Mongolian within a few decades of the death of Chingis Khan, during the middle of the 13th century. The original script was borrowed from the Uighur Turks. Evidence suggests that the book was the official account of the origins of the ruling clan of the Mongols, the life history of that clan's late leader Chingis Khan, and the reign of Ogodei, Chingis's son and successor... This written account seems to be the family's own version of the story, and as such was a form of private property... no manuscript of the original Mongolian version of the text has yet been located. This book, entitled Yüan Ch'ao Pi Shih, *(usually translated as* The Secret History of the Mongols*) is traceable to a collection of documents copied out during the Ming Dynasty, after the Mongols had been driven from China.* The Secret History, *being the earliest written document in Mongolian, must have been composed from oral traditions... it is a clear example of story telling as history... The book is divided into five parts, reflecting the internal structure of the text:*

1. *"The Heritage and Youth of Chingis Khan" – the genealogy of the Mongol clans; a story of their ancestors, Alan the Fair and Bodonchar the Fool. By the end of this part, most of the major characters have been introduced.*
2. *"The Wars in Mongolia" – It begins with the division of leadership between Temujin (Chingis Khan) and other clan leaders. They discuss the relative strengths of the various clans and tribes as they wax and wane. As Chingis Khan gains military supremacy over all the major tribes in Mongolia, one of his most important goals is to unify the many clans and tribes.*
3. *"The Developing Empire" – begins with the Great Assembly of the Year of the Tiger (A.D.1206) during which Temujin is once again proclaimed Chingis Khan, now ruler of all the tribes of Central Asia.*
4. *The Wars of Cathay and the West – This is the Mongolian account of the military campaign in northern China and the Middle East. This begins with a campaign against the Kin Dynasty during the Year of the Sheep (1211) and ends with the death of Chingis Khan during the final campaign against the Tanghut in 1227.*
5. *"The Reign of Ogodei Khan" – This section begins with the election of Ogodei during the Great Assembly in the Year of the Rat (1228/9) and ends with a brief summary of the accomplishments and faults of Ogodei Khan.*

Overview:

Twelfth-Century Asia: The events described in the Secret History take place in the geographical area now within the borders of the Soviet Union, Mongolian People's Republic, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In the West, Islamic culture stretched from the Iranian plateau toward the northern frontier of Chinese culture via a string of oasis cities along the Tarim Basin to the Hindu Kush.

Since the fall of the Tang Dynasty northern China had been ruled by non-Chinese people. The first of these rulers were the Khitai (Ch'i-tan), a Central Asian tribe native to the Mongolia-China borderlands. The name Khitai became the Mongol and Russian word for China itself, and via the writings of Marco Polo, became "Cathy" in European literature. In 1125 the Khitai themselves were overthrown and succeeded by a tribe from the Manchurian region, known as the Jurchid. In a mixture of ethnic titles and languages typical of Central Asian culture, the 12th century Mongols referred to this Jurchid ruler as the Golden King (Altan Khan) of the northern Chinese kingdom they still called Cathay (Khitad).

The Chinese ruling class had fallen back to the south of the Yellow River where they ruled as the Sung (Song) Dynasty, claiming to be the preservers of true Chinese culture. On the western border in what is now Gansu Province and eastern Tibet, was an autonomous kingdom ruled by the Tibetan people and called Tanghut by the Mongols. The Chinese called their land the Western Kingdom. The northern border of the Tanghut and Kin Kingdoms was the Great Wall and the Gobi

Desert. Beyond this lived various tribes of mixed ethnic background, who were nomads on the steppes from the Gobi desert in the south to the shores of Lake Baikal and the Siberian forest in the north. These many tribes carried names like Tatar, Mongol, Merkid, Naiman, Kereyid and Oyirad.

The Secret History begins in the time when the first ancestors of the Mongol tribe came across the "inland sea" to settle near the source of the Onan River in what is now western Mongolia. The lineage begins with the animal pair of the wolf and the deer and continues through several generations. Strength alone determines who becomes the leader in the next generation. The primary lineage is that of the Borjigin clan, into which Temujin (the future Chingis Khan) was born. The political situation that preceded Temujin's birth was centered on conflict between Mongol and Tatar tribes... as the Mongol tribes first became committed to a war of revenge against the Tatar, and then a war of domination against the Kin. This war in turn expanded until the Sung were also conquered, and all of China was ruled by the Mongols under the Yüan Dynasty.

Mongol Culture Before the Empire

The Family: One of the central facts of the Secret History is the family unit where the social context the family operates in is the camp rather than the village or city. It is a nomadic culture based on herding of horses, sheep, camels, oxen and goats. The family moved from the camp to camp and fortunes waxed and waned. In the youth of Chingis Khan, his mother Hogelun keeps her small family alive and united after they are expelled from camp of her late husband. One strong moral theme in the Secret History is the importance of cooperation and mutual respect within the family unit. Whenever Chingis Khan forgets these principles, his mother or one of his wives does not hesitate to step forward and correct him. In fact all the major speeches concerning family are delivered by or about women. When Chingis selects his third son, Ogodei, to succeed him, it illustrates the importance of keeping family harmony in the face of tensions. The territory is divided among the sons, the widow and the youngest son usually got the home pasturage and the father's possessions and the eldest got the territory farthest from the original home pasturage while the elder sons are sent off to fight the wars.

Marriage: The various tribes in Mongolia practiced some form of exogamy: a man must find a wife someplace other than his own clan or tribe. The woman entered another clan to establish her family, and each family was a mixture of clan or tribal blood and traditions. In some cases, marriage was the result of raids, abductions or warfare. All the tribes also practiced polygamy. Having more than one wife was a sign of wealth and political power. The first wife held a unique position since the succession went to her sons and she could inherit the power of her husband if one of the sons was not an obvious successor.

Class Structure: The population was divided into social classes. The Secret History is primarily the story of the noble class, that is those people directly descended from the leaders of the previous generation. A major theme of the narrative is that loyalty to a rightful leader is always to be rewarded, and treachery to be punished. Below both the noble and common class was a class of slaves or servants, primarily made up of war captives. Servants or commoners could raise their status by serving a strong member of the noble class as personal retainers.

Religion: While there is a good deal of religious ceremony and reference in the Secret History there is little said about religion itself. Traditional Mongol religion is usually a form of shamanism and consists of belief in various gods (tengri). The most prominent is Eternal Blue Heaven (Koko Mongke Tengri). At the same time, forms of Christianity and Buddhism were present in Mongolia, and Islam and Taoism were present at its borders. Some tribes contained Nestorian Christians. The Tanghut were a Tibetan Buddhist people and the Uighur practiced a Turkish form of Buddhism which has since disappeared.

Temujin's Rise to Power

The bulk of the Secret History is a uniquely detailed account of how the eldest son of a nobleman from one of the clans rose to be first the ruler of the united Mongol clans, then the conqueror of all the nomad tribes and finally the "world conqueror." This

man was first given the name of Temujin, after a Tatar warrior his father captured shortly before his birth. A central theme is the *anda* bond, a pledge of a relationship between two men with a special acknowledgment by both parties that they agreed to aid each other under any circumstances. This *anda* bond existed between Temujin's father, Yesugei and the leader of the Kereyid tribe, Toghoril Khan. This *anda* pledge carried with it responsibilities analogous to family bonds. Because of this *anda* pledge, Yesugei and Toghoril were "brothers" and also had the role of "father" to the other man's children.

Temujin was later given the name of Chingis Khan, a name by which he is known throughout the world. In the *Secret History* he receives this name when he is elected khan of the Mongols by his uncles and cousins, the various clan leaders. By the end of the 11th century Chingis Khan had built a single nation out of a diverse population. In 1206 a second coronation was held – an elaborate occasion at which the Great Khan rewarded all the men who had served him up to this point by assigning them subjects to rule and other social privileges. Once all the people of Central Asia recognized his power, the Mongol ruler turned his newly swollen armies toward urban, wealthy China. During the first war against China the Mongol army attacked the Tanghut first, then the Kin. Then they turned to conquer Sultan Mohammed on the banks of the Indus. The *Secret History* does not mention the massacre of entire urban populations and the destruction of ancient cities by the Mongols... The delicate balance that had existed for centuries between the nomadic and urban civilizations in western Asia is suddenly destroyed, with the Moslem intelligentsia at the service of the nomad ruling house. The second Tanghut war is depicted as a campaign of retribution. Chingis Khan died during the campaign, having lived into his sixties, and was returned for secret burial in Mongolia during the summer of 1227. Control of the new empire went to his third son, Ogodei, confirmed in 1229, who had a three-fold military strategy: (a) renew the war of conquest in northern China; (b) reinforce the Mongol Army in the Middle East; (c) conquer the steppe region of Russia and Eastern Europe.

Book 1: *The Heritage and Youth of Chingis Khan*

There came into the world a blue-gray wolf
whose destiny was Heaven's will.
His wife was a fallow deer.
They traveled together across the inland sea
and when they camped near the source of the Onan River, their first son was born named Batachikhan.

[*This section is followed by a long list of who begat whom. We pick up the tale with Yesugei, the Brave who is the father of Temujin..*]

...[Eventually] Yesugei, the Brave, Temujin's father [was born].

...Yesugei the Brave was out hunting with his falcon on the Onan...[*He saw a nobleman from another tribe riding with a beautiful girl he had just captured and married*]... Quickly he rode back to his tent and just as quick returned with his two brothers.[*They captured the girl*]. Then Yesugei took Hogelun Ujin to his tent as his wife.

So his clan went to war against the Tatar.
It was during one of these battles that Yesugei captured a Tatar chief named Temujin Uge....and Hogelun Ujin was about to give birth to their first child.
It was here that Chingis Khan was born.
As he was born...they gave him the name Temujin, saying:
"He was born when his father captured the Tatar, Temujin Uge." Yesugei had four sons by Hogelun Ujin. Then they had one daughter, Temulum.

That year, when Temujin was nine...Yesugei came on a camp of the Tatar
...But the Tatar recognized who he was, and said to themselves:
"Yesugei of the Kiyan clan is among us here."
They remembered the times he'd defeated them in battle. Secretly they decided to kill him, mixing poisons into the drinks he was offered. On his way back he felt something was wrong and after riding three days to get back to his tent he knew he was dying.

The following spring, two widows, the senior women of the Tayichigud clan, performed the ceremony of sacrifice

to the ancestor's spirits. By the time Hogelun Ujin arrived for the service they'd already burnt all the meat and divided it between them, leaving her nothing.

Hogelun said to them:
"You must be saying to yourselves 'Yesugei the Brave is dead now and his sons are still boys. So you think you can just leave me out of the ceremony and keep it all for yourselves? You think you can divide up the meat leaving nothing for me? I see what you're up to. You think I will just sit here while you are feasting from now on, and you don't even have to invite me to join you. And one morning you'll break camp and move on, and not even wake me."

...So at dawn the next day the two chiefs of the Tayichigud clan,...
Ordered the people to move on down the Onan River.
Old Man Charakha saw they were leaving Hogelun Ujin behind, that they were abandoning these mothers and sons.
[*Charakha protested and was stabbed. Temujin wept for the dying man and then left the tent.*]
When Hogelun Ujin saw the people were leaving her she grabbed up the standard of Yesugei the Brave and rode out into the traveling camp.
Just the sight of her holding the banner and shouting caused half the people to stop and turn back with her.
But the one who turned back couldn't stay.
They were forced to return with the others by the Tayichigud and told to move on.
...Hogelun Ujin, a woman born with great powers, took care of her sons.
...She went up and down the banks of the Onan
and gathered pears and wild fruits.
Day and night she found food for their mouths.
Mother Hogelun, a woman born with great courage, took care of her sons.
...These boys who were nourished on the wild onion and pear, who were fed by Ujin, the Mother, became the great Lords of all men.
These boys who were nourished on the roots she dug for them, who were cared for with pride by Mother Ujin, became the wise men who gave us our laws.
These boys who were nourished on the wild onion and pear, who were fed by the beautiful Ujin, grew up to be fine, daring men.
Once they grew into men, they pledged to themselves:
"Now we'll feed our mother."

[*The Tayichigud chief, realizing that Hogelun's children might be grown, succeed in capturing Temujin. Temujin escapes and is hidden by a family in the camp until he is able to rejoin his family.*]

Then one day thieves drove off the family's eight horses, their silver-white geldings that grazed in front of their tent.
Temujin and his brothers could only watch the thieves ride away.
They had no horses left to chase after them...
As the sun set, their half-brother brought back [the one remaining horse an] old mare on foot.

[*Temujin went after the thieves.*]
He saddled the mare and followed the tracks that the geldings had left in the grass.
After riding three nights on the fourth morning he came on a huge herd.
A good-looking young man was tending the herd and milking the mares.
Temujin stopped and asked him if he'd seen the silver-white geldings, and the fellow replied:
"Just this morning before sunrise
some men drove eight horses by here.
They sound like the ones you're after.
I'll show you their tracks."
..."You look like you're in trouble," he said,
"the kind of trouble that could happen to any of us.
I'll go with you and be your companion.
My father is Nakhu the Rich and I'm his only son.
My name is Bogorchu."
So the too young men rode off together...
They rode for three days...
They came to a large camping circle of tents.
They could see the eight silver-white geldings...
"Those are my horses," Temujin said when he saw them...
So [the two of them] rode into the camp circle and drove out the horses.
...They rode for three days and three nights until they got back to Bogorchu's herd.
Temujin said to him:
"My friend, could I have brought back these horses

without you? Let's divide them between us. How many do you want?"
But Bogorchu replied:
"When I saw you were in trouble I said,
`I'll be your friend and I'll help you.'
Should I take your horses now like they were my spoils?
My father is called Nakhu the Rich and I am his only son.
What my father will give me is all I need
If I've been any help that's my payment.
I don't want your horses."

[*They went back to Bogorchu's tent where they found his father in tears, thinking his son was dead. Bogorchu gave Temujin provisions for the trip back to his family.*]
Then Nakhu the Rich said to them:
"You two boys are companions now.
From now on the one should never abandon the other."
[*Temujin returned home and his family was happy. Later, Bogorchu joined him and never left his side.*]

Even since he was nine years old when he'd first been promised in marriage to Borte Ujin, Temujin planned to claim the daughter of Dei the Wise as his wife...
When Temujin arrived there Dei was happy to see him.
"I've heard that the Tayichigud leaders envied you," he said, "and I'd almost given up any hope of seeing you again. But at last you've come back."
Dei the Wise gave him Borte and together the family rode back toward Temujin's camp.
[*Borte's mother gave Temujin a black sable coat as a wedding gift.*]

Temujin...remembered that long ago Toghoril Ong Khan of the Kereyid had been *anda* with his father. Yesugei.
..."Since he was my father's *anda* then he's like my father."
So they rode to Ong Khan...
"Since in the old days you and my father were *anda* you're like my father.
I've just married an Ungirad woman and I've brought you the wedding gift."
Then Temujin gave him the black sable coat.
Ong Khan was so pleased by this he promised Temujin:
"In return for this coat of sables
I'll get all your people who've scattered.
In return for this coat of sables I'll round up all your people who have gone separate ways.
Let my promise live here," he said,
touching his back, "And here," touching his breast with his hand.
This done, the brothers rode back to their camp...

[*Temujin's family is attacked by three from the Merkid clan, eager to get their revenge since Hogelun had been stolen from their brother. They take Borte. Temujin and his brother turn to Ong Khan for his help in returning Borte. Temujin needs to ask his* anda *Jamugha for help. An army was formed and they met on the battlefield.*]

Jamugha stood at the head of the army of 20,000 men.
[*The leaders recognized each other.*]
Jamugha spoke first, saying:
"Didn't we say to each other, `Even if there's a blizzard, even if there's a rainstorm, we won't arrive late?
Aren't the Mongol a people who's word is sacred?
Haven't we said to each other,
`Let's get rid of anyone who can't live up to his word'?"
[*Then the forces attacked the Merkids, killing all the people.*]

As the Merkid people tried to flee from our army
...as our soldiers rode out of the night capturing and killing the Merkid,
Temujin rode through the retreating camp shouting out:
"Borte! Borte!"
Borte Ujin was among the Merkid who ran in the darkness and when she heard his voice, when she recognized Temujin's voice, Borte leaped from her cart...
[Temujin] recognized Borte Ujin.
In a moment he was down from his horse
and they were in each other's arms, embracing.
There and then Temujin sent off a messenger...
"I've found what I came for. Let's go no further and make our camp here."
This is how Temujin found Bote Ujin saving her from the Merkid..

...Temujin thanked Toghoril Khan and Jamugha for their help, saying:
"Because I was joined by my father the Khan and Anda Jamugha my strength was increased by Heaven and

Earth.
In the name of Eternal Blue Heaven with the aid of Our Mother the Earth we've torn out the hearts of the Merkid warriors, we've emptied their beds and killed all their sons, we've captured all the rest of their women.
Now that we've scattered the Merkid we should go back."

...So the forces of Temujin, Toghoril Khan and Jamugha...withdrew...
Temujin and Jamugha kept their forces together riding back to the valley to camp...

Book 2: *The Wars in Mongolia*

Temujin and Jamugha pitched their tents...
With their people united in one great camp,
the two leaders decided they should renew their friendship, their pledge of *anda.*
[*The two young men had pledged their* anda *bond when they were 11 years old, and now declared their* anda *a second time, exchanging gifts.*]

Temujin and Jamugha loved each other for one year, and when half the second year had passed they agreed it was time to move camp.
(*Temujin was displeased with Jamugha's decision on where they would pitch their camp. He turned to Mother Hogelun.*]

Before Mother Hogelun could answer
Borte Ujin spoke up, saying:
"They say Anda Jamugha's a fickle man.
I think the time has come when he's finally grown tired of us.
These words are meant to cover some kind of plot.
When he stops, let's not pitch our camp.
Let's tell our people to keep right on moving,
and if we travel all night by daybreak our camps will be well separated."

[*The camp kept on moving and other tribes joined them. One leader said the following to Temujin.*]
"...a sign from Heaven came to me in a dream.
And told me that Temujin was meant to be our leader...
'Heaven and Earth have agreed that Temujin should be Lord of the Nation.
I've come to bring you the Nation.'"
...Temujin answered him:
"If I am allowed to rule the Nation
I'll make you a captain of ten thousand men."
But Khorchi replied:
"...After you've made me a captain of 10,000 men allow me to choose thirty wives from among the most beautiful girls you've assembled.
And remember everything I've said will come to pass."

Then they moved the whole camp...
[*Some leaders conferred and said to Temujin*]
"We want you to be Khan.
...If we disobey your command during battle
take away our possessions, our children, and wives.
Leave us behind to the dust, cutting off our heads where we stand and letting them fall to the ground.
If we disobey your counsel in peacetime take away our tents and our goods, our wives and our children,
Leave us behind when you move,
abandoned in the desert without a protector."
Having given their word, having taken this oath,
they proclaimed Temujin Khan of the Mongol
and gave him the name Chingis Khan.

[*A kinsman of Jamugha is killed by one of Temujin's men. Jamugha, as head of the Jadaran clan, and thirteen other clans in his alliance, raised an army of thirty thousand men and rode...to attack Chingis Khan. Two men...warned him about the attack...*
And Chingis Khan raised an army of thirty thousand men to fight Jamugha..

[*Chingis lost the first battle. Then Chingis fought the Tatars and defeated them. He was so excited he honored his new allies with Chinese titles. He was praised and Prince Hsiang told him he would inform the Chinese Emperor of his work, maybe even getting Chingis a greater title. Next Chingis attacked and beat the Jurkin.*]

Then in the Year of the Cock many clans joined together against us.
...all these people gathered together, saying:
"Let's elect Jamugha as our Khan."
...They agreed to attack Chingis Khan and Ong Khan

together.

[*Chingis was warned and sent word to Ong Khan to join their armies together.*]

Once their armies were joined they said to each other:
"Let's go to war with Jamugha."

[*In the ensuing battle, two great shamans cause havoc, destroying their own army rather than that of Temujin. Jamugha is routed, robbing the camps of the people who elected him Khan. Chingis follows one of the armies and is wounded but nursed back to health. Later Chingis met the man who wounded him.*]

"...Who was it who was able to ire an arrow from up on the mountain that pierced the spine of my white-mouthed warhouse?"
Jebe answered him:
"I shot at you from up on the mountain.
If you kill me right here I'll fertilize a bit of dirt the size of your hand.
But if the Khan will allow me to live I'll ride out in his service and cut the deepest waters in two, split the brightest diamond,
Just let him give me the order, 'Go here in my name,'
and I'll be there with a force that will shatter blue rock..."
Chingis answered him:
"Usually a man who's fought against us is the last to admit it.
He'll lie about what he's done or simply hide out of fear.
But this man doesn't deny that he's fought us; in fact he declares it!
Here's a man who will tell you straight what he's done and here's a man that I will have in my army...
I'll name him Jebe, 'the weapon.'
From now on that is your name and you'll ride by my side."

[*Chingis discovered that his father's* anda, *Ong Khan, is alone and weary. Chingis sends messengers to find him.*]

Chingis told his people:
"Ong Khan has come to live with us,
He comes to us weary an hungry."
Chingis gathers taxes from his people to provide for Ong Khan, and he brought him to live in his own camping circle.
When the winter came, Chingis and Ong Khan rode together side by side...

[*Many other wars continue – against the Tatars for one. He captures the daughter of the Tatar's chief and takes her as his wife. Upon her request, he also takes her older sister as his wife. At the same time, Ong Khan went to war against the Merkid but did not share the spoils with Chingis. But Ong Khan loses a major battle and his wives and sons are captured. He calls Temujin for help and Chingis sends his four greatest heroes, regaining Ong Khan's people for him.*]

Ong Khan spoke again, saying:
"When my people had completely deserted me,
my *anda*, Yesugei the Brave, saved them for me.
When they left me again, his son, Temujin, brought them back...
Now I'm growing old... Who will rule over my people?
My younger brothers are worthless men,
My son is like having no son at all.
I'll adopt Temujin, making him my son's elder brother.
Then with two sons I'll be happy."
So before all his people...Ong Khan and Chingis Khan declared themselves father and son...
Because in the old days Chingis' father, Yesugei, declared himself *anda* with Ong Khan, and Chingis considered Ong Khan to be like his father.

[*To consolidate the bond, Chingis gave his eldest son, Jochi, in marriage to Ong Khan's daughter. But Ong Khan's son was against alliances, believing that a woman marrying a Mongol would be treated like a servant. This attitude turned Chingis against Ong Khan and his family. Jamugha knew how Chingis felt and joined others to plot against Chingis Khan, pledging to help the chiefs in any attack against the Mongols, Ong Khan's son told his father of the plan.*]

"How can you think such things about my son, Temujin?
In our times of greatest trouble he's been our support,
Now if we think badly of him
We're sure to lose Heaven's protection."

...Ong Khan wouldn't even consider the messenger's words...
[The son came to his father.]
"Even now, when you're still alive,
Temujin has no respect for you.
...when you're so old...so feeble you gag on meat,
will Temujin allow us to rule our own people?"

[*But Ong Khan lost heart, afraid his son would hate him if he didn't agree. Father and son plot by agreeing to tell Chingis his son can marry into their clan, planning to capture Chingis at the engagement feast. Chingis is suspicious, sending two other men in his place. This alerted Ong Khan's men who planned to capture Chingis. Two armies were formed with Jamugha riding with Ong Khan. However, Jamugha had sent a secret message to Chingis, warning him. They fought for a day but then Chinigis realized his third son, Ogodei, was missing. Ogodei is found wounded, but saved by a loyal retainer. Many other battles follow as Chingis tries to defeat Ong Khan. His army is defeated but Ong Khan and his son escape.*]

So they took away the possessions of all the Kereyid people and divided them among us so everyone had what they wanted.
Then they divided and dispersed all the Kereyid clans, and the ten thousand Tubegen...
The Kereyid people were disbanded.
Ong Khan and [his son] had not wanted to surrender themselves and had escaped from the fighting with nothing but the clothes on their backs.
They rode off toward the east and when Ong Khan reached the river he stopped there to drink.
When he came down to the river
he was captured by a Naiman soldier...
When the man seized him, he said:
"I am Ong Khan,"
but the soldier didn't believe him.
He didn't recognize that this was Ong Khan and he killed him.

[*Chingis decides to fight the Naiman, the most numerous clan of the steppes. A debate developed among clan leaders regarding the strength of the Mongols. Jamugha had joined with the Naiman.*]

Chingis Khan assembled his army and spoke to them, saying:
"This will be a great battle. This will be a decisive one.
We may lose everything or we may lose only a few..."

[*The Naiman are defeated. All of Jamugha's Mongol forces leave him. Victory follows victory for the Mongols.*]

When Chingis Khan defeated the Naiman army
Jamugha had been with the Naiman
and in the battle all of his people were taken away.
He escaped with only five followers and became a bandit in the mountains.
But he was seized by his followers and brought to Chingis Khan.

Because he had been captured this way, Jamugha said:
"Tell my *anda*, the Khan,
'Black crows have captured a beautiful duck.
Peasants and slaves have laid hands on their lord.
Brown vultures have captured a mandarin duck.
Slaves and servants have conspired against their lord.
Surely my holy *anda* will know how to respond to this.'"

[*Chingis kills the men who captured Jamugha*]

Then Chingis Khan said:
"Tell Jamugha this.
Now we are together.
Let's be allies.
...Though you left me you were always my *anda*."

Jamugha answered him:
"Long ago when we were children...I declared myself to be your *anda*.
...Then it was as if people came between us with knives...
And now my *anda*, the Khan wants to favor me,
and says to me,'Let's be allies.'
When I should have been his ally I deserted him.
...Now that the world is ready for you what good would I be as your ally?
...I went wrong when I strove to be a better man than my *anda*.
In this life, of the two of us,

it's my name that's reached from sunrise to sunset;
it's Jamugha who's reached the end of his days.
...My *anda*, if you want to favor me, then let me die quickly and you'll be at peace in your heart..."
Hearing this Chingis Khan spoke:
"Though my *anda* deserted me and said many things against me, I've never heard that he ever wanted me dead.
He's a man we might all learn from but he's not willing to stay with us... Now I say 'Let's be allies' but you refuse me.
When I try to spare your life you won't allow it.
Allow this man to kill you according to your own wishes without shedding your blood."
And Chingis Khan made a decree, saying:
"Execute Jamugha without shedding his blood
and bury his bones with all due honor."
He had Jamugha killed and his bones properly buried.

Book 3: *The Developing Empire*

And so in the Year of the Tiger,
having set in order the lives of all the people whose tents are protected by skirts of felt,
the Mongol clans assembled at the head of the Onan.
They raised a white standard of nine tails
and proclaimed Chingis Khan the Great Khan.

[*Chingis rewards all who fought with him, giving them titles and the right to rule 95,000 households. He also made provisions for all his adopted brothers. Bogorchu, who had proved most loyal and faithful, was given the right to rule over 10,000 people south of the Altai. He met with each of his followers and reviewed their loyalty to him, in all cases honoring them with land, control of households or multiple dispensations in case they erred. Now Chingis met with other groups and created alliances through marriage.*]

Prince Khubilai was sent to war against the Kharlugh people; Arslan Khan, who ruled over the Kharlugh, surrendered to him, and Khubilai brought him back to Chingis Khan...
Chingis Khan rewarded him, saying:
"I'll give him one of my daughters to marry."
...Then the ruler of the Uighur people sent ambassadors to Chingis Khan.
The two ambassadors came with this message:
"Just as we see our Mother Sun when the clouds burn away from the sky, just as we see the flowing waters when the ice melts away from the rivers,
in the same way I rejoice when I hear of the power and accomplishments of Chingis Khan.
If Chingis Khan will honor me with a small gift, a small ring from his golden belt, a shred of cloth from his red coat, I'll be like the fifth son to him and give him all my strength."
When Chingis heard this message he was very pleased and he sent this reply:
"Tell the ruler of the Uighur that I'll grant his wish and also give him one of my daughters.
Let him become my fifth son.
He may come to me and take back all the silver and gold, all the big pearls and little pearls,
all the brocade, damasks, and silks that he wants."
The ruler of the Uighur came to Chingis Khan,
taking silver and gold, big pearls and little pearls, brocade, damasks and silks,
and Chingis Khan gave him one of his daughters known as Al Altan, the golden one.

In the year of the Hare
Chingis Khan sent off the army of the Right Hand to conquer the People of the Forest.
His son Jochi was placed in command...
When he arrived at the land of the 10,000 Kirghiz...all surrendered to Jochi.
...He took the commanders of the Kirghiz and Oyirad chiefs and brought them back to Chingis Khan's camp, where they presented Chingis Khan with white falcons, white geldings, and black sables.
...Then Chingis rewarded Jochi for what he had accomplished, saying:
"You are the eldest of my sons,
You've gone from my tent to find your own manhood and luck has been with you.
You've managed to conquer the People of the Forest without causing suffering or bloodshed in the lands that you've taken.
All these people you've conquered now belong to you."

[*Chingis Khan now had to divide the spoils of his battles.*]

"Now I'll divide up the people, giving them to my mother, my sons and my younger brothers."

As he divided them he said:
"The one who has suffered most to assemble the Nation is my mother.
Jochi is my eldest son and Odchigin my youngest brother."
To his mother and his brother Odchigin who received their share together as is the custom, he gave 10,000 households.
His mother felt that this was too small a portion but she hid her feelings and didn't speak up.
He gave to Jochi 9,000 households, to Chagadei 8,000, to Ogodei and Tolui he gave 5,000 each.

[*He gave each of his brothers households, also. He also fought men who threatened his brothers.*]

Book 4: *The Wars in Cathay and the West*

After this in the year of the Sheep Chingis Khan set out to fight the people of Cathay.
First he took the city of Fu-chou, then...he took Hsuan-te-fu.
From there he sent out an army under Jebe's command to take the fortress at Chu-yung Kuan.

[*Jebe tricked the Chinese by pretending to retreat. When they came out of the fortress he turned around and attacked, and beat the Cathay army. Chingis followed him...*]

...killing the finest and most courageous soldiers of Cathay, the Jurchin and Khara Khitan fighters...
He sent the army to attack the capital at Chung-tu and sent others out to take all the towns and cities nearby.

...[T]he Golden King of Cathay's great general, Prince Fu-hsing, advised his king:
"Destiny is with the Mongol.
Heaven and Earth are on their side.
Has the time come when you'll be forced to give them your throne?
The Mongol army is so powerful they've killed the finest and most courageous soldiers of Cathay, the Jurchin and Kahara Khitan fighters, and slaughtered so many our army's destroyed.
...I say we should offer tribute to the Khan of the Mongol for now, and negotiate some settlement with him.
Once we've negotiated a settlement and the Mongol army has returned to the north, then we can consider among ourselves what more we can do.
...Let's give one of your daughters to their Khan
Let's give the men of their army heavy burdens of gold, silver, satins and other goods.
...The Golden King agreed...
He sent a message offering tribute to Chingis Khan and gave him one of his daughters as a wife.
The gates of Chung-tu were opened and they set out great quantities of gold, silver, satins and other goods, letting the men of the Mongol army divide it themselves depending on how many beasts each had to carry the load.
...The army withdrew to the north.

[*At the same time, Chingis fought the Tanghut, whom surrendered to him, offering their assistance and the camels they raised.*]

But once again, in the Year of the Dog,
Chingis Khan set out to war against Cathay.
[*He had been refused passage to the Southern Sung Emperor by the Golden King of Cathay. When the King of Cathay heard that Chingis was attacking, he sent three generals to stop him. Chingis defeated the fierce Khitan soldiers. When the King of Cathay heard this he fled from Chung-to to Kai-feng, leaving his troops behind to die of hunger. Chingis sent his troops to take over Chung-tu.*]

From his refuge in Kai-feng the Golden King sued for peace with Chingis Khan, sending one of his sons with a hundred companions as tribute...
Accepting this tribute Chingis Khan said:
"I will withdraw my troops..."
[*Chingis sent his army north to the land of the Jurchid, who surrendered to the Mongols. Then Khasar rejoined Chingis at the Great Camp in Mongolia.*]

Once Chingis heard that his hundred ambassadors had been arrested and killed by the Moslems, he said:

"How did the Moslems break my golden reins? I'll go to war with them to get satisfaction for their crimes."
His Tatar wife spoke:
"The Khan will cross the high mountain passes, cross over wide rivers, waging a long war far from home.
Before he leaves has he thought about setting his people in order?
There is no eternity for all things born in this world.
When your body falls like an old tree who will rule your people, these fields of tangled grasses?
When your body crumbles like an old pillar who will rule your people, these great flocks of birds?
Which of your four heroic sons will you name?
What I've said everyone knows is true, your sons, your commanders, all the common people, even someone as low as myself.
You should decide now who it will be."
Chingis Khan replied:
"Even though she is only a woman, what [she] says is right.
...I've been forgetting it as if I won't follow my ancestors someday.
I've been sleeping like I won't someday be taken by death.
Jochi, you are my eldest son.
What do you say?"
[Jochi was attacked by Chagadei. The two brothers were pulled apart.]

...Koko Chos, always standing at Chagadei's side, spoke:
"Of all his sons, your father had highest hopes for you.
In the time before you were born the stars in the heavens were spinning around.
Everyone was fighting each other...
All the nations were at war with each other.
When your mother was stolen by the Merkid she didn't want it to happen.
It happened when one nation came armed to fight with another.
She didn't run away from her home.
It happened when one nation attacked the other.
She wasn't in love with another man.
She was stolen by men who had come to kill other men.
Weren't you born from the same warm womb as Jochi?
If you insult the mother who gave you her life from heart, if you cause her love for you to freeze up, even if you apologize to her later the damage is done.
If you speak against the mother who brought you to life from her own belly even if you take back what you said the damage is done.
Your father the Khan has built this great nation.
He tied his head to his saddle poured his own blood into great leather buckets, never closed his eyes or put his ear to the pillow.
His own sleeve was his pillow and the skirt of his jacket his bed.
...Your mother fought their beside him, working together, she placed her headdress on top of her head and tucked in the ends of her skirt...
She raised up her children, giving each of you half the food that passed by her mouth.
Out of her great compassion she even blocked her own mouth and gave all her food to you, leaving her own stomach empty.
She pulled you up by the shoulders and said to herself, 'How can I make these children as tall as great men?'
...She cleaned out your diapers and lifted your feet to teach you to walk.
She brought you up to the shoulders of men, to the flanks of horses.
Don't you think she wants to see you all find happiness?"
...Chagadai said:
"Jochi and I are your two eldest sons.
Together we give all our strength to our father the Khan...
Brother Ogodei is honest.
Let's agree on Ogodei.
If Ogodei stays at the side of our father, if our father instructs him on how to wear the hat of the Great Khan, that will be fine."
So Chingis Khan made a decree:
"...Make up your camps far apart and each of you rule your own kingdom.
Don't forget what you have pledged today,
Don't do anything which will give men cause to insult you.
...I'll give you each a band of people...
Now, Ogodei, what do you say?"
Ogodei answered:
"If my father the Khan commands me to speak what can I say to him?

Can I answer him no and decline?
I will say that I'll do the best my ability will allow."
[*Tolui, the youngest brother pledged to support Ogodei also, as did all of Chingis Khan's brothers.*]

In the Year of the Hare Chingis Khan went to war with the Moslems...
[*Chingis had many victories against the Moslems, robbing cities and causing the Moslems to retreat from the cities of Bukhara, and Samarkand, even driving them back to the Indus River. He fought with his sons because they conquered the Moslems but did not share the spoils with their father until he was calmed by his archers.*]

Then he sent his [warriors] against the city of Merv, and to conquer the people between Iraq and the Indus. He sent [another warrior] to war in the North, where he defeated eleven kingdoms and tribes, crossing the Volga and Ural Rivers, finally going to war with Kiev.

Once he had conquered the Moslem people Chingis Khan appointed agents to govern each of their cities... [of the Turkestan: Bukhara, Samarkand, Gurganj, Khotan, Kashgar, Yarkand, and Kusin Tarim...]

[*Chingis fought the Tanghut people, defeating them when he fought them a second time.*]

Chingis Khan took everything from the Tanghut people... He ordered the men and the women of their cities be killed, their children and grandchildren, saying:
"As long as I can eat food and still say,
'Make everyone who lives in their cities vanish,"
kill them all and destroy their homes.
As long as I am still alive keep up the slaughter."
...Chingis Khan had gone to war with the Tanghut a second time.
He had destroyed them and coming back to Mongolia, in the Year of the Pig, Chingis Khan ascended to Heaven...

[We will turn directly to the poem entitled *The Death of Chingis Khan...*]

Chingis Khan proclaimed to his people, "The only kingdom I have not yet conquered is the kingdom of the Tanghut. I promised long ago to conquer them"
And he gathered his army and rode for three years to reach the land of the Tanghut.

...When they arrived at the Tanghut capital the Mongol army surrounded the city.
[*After a battle ...*] Chingis Khan conquered the Tanghut people, killed the leader and took his wife, Gorbeljin the Fair...
"My skin was once more beautiful than it is now,"
she said to the men who guarded her one day.
"Let me go down to the river to wash and my beautiful color will return once again. But you must let me wash by myself."
...That night she slept with Chingis Khan and with her embrace she passed a mortal illness into his blood.
While he slept she slipped away from his tent and just as she had vowed she drowned herself in the Black River.

...When Chingis Khan awoke the next day he grew sicker and sicker, and everyone could see he was about to die.
In the heat of his fever the Great Lord thrashed about in his bed and cried out:
"I can see Borte, my wise queen, and my first wife;
I see Khulan, Yisu , Yisuken, my three wives, who have come to love each other like sisters; and standing before them I see Borte, my oldest friend.
I see nine men who have won every battle and stood by each other in every fight.
They are my nine heroes.
I see four great stags standing before me; they are my four sons.
I see a great rock rising from the earth; it is my ministers and princes.
And in every direction I see my great treasure;
I see my countless people.
My jade realm, my wives and children, all the people I have gathered together into a nation, my beloved country."

As his sickness grew worse Chingis Khan cried out, speaking of his visions, and his voice grew so weak that they could not make out what he said.
Kilugen the Brave, knelt beside him and spoke gently saying:

"Oh, Lord, if you die your wise queen Borte will surely die of grief. The jade crystal which is your realm will surely crumble...
Your brave sons, Ogodei and Tolui, will be left as orphans.
The people you've gathered from the descendants of each tribe will come to an end."

The Ruler raised himself slightly in his bed and said to them:
"There is no skin to cover a stone of purest jade.
There is no shell around the hardest iron.
The body we love and are loved by has no existence in eternity.
With your mind, focused, act decisively in all things.

Acting to achieve some goal is the greatest of actions.
A man who keeps his word will live with a mind that is strong.
Keep your actions modest and supported by the people.
Know the truth; your bodies too will someday pass on.

...The acts of my grandson Khubilai are the sign of a great leader. You must listen to what he says and follow him someday.

...These were the words he spoke to those who gathered around him.
At the age of sixty-six years, in the Ding-Swine year,
on the fifteenth day of the seventh month,
in the city of Turmegei in the Tanghut land,
Chingis Khan departed and rose to his father in Heaven.

...With his queens and his sons at the head of the procession and everyone weeping and wailing from grief,
they raised his golden body from its place on the cart and were unable to carry it any farther.
They erected an eternal stone marker and built around it eight white houses for prayer and offerings.
Then they buried the Lord's body...Here his eternal name
Sutu Bogda Tai Ming Chingis Khan lies to the present day.

2. THE MONGOL WAR MACHINE

(James Chambers, *The Devil's Horsemen*, New York: Antheneum, 1979, pp. 51-67. Permission pending)

In the 13th century the Mongol army was the best in the world. Genghis Khan was not only a great conqueror; he also had a genius for organization. And unlike many other organizers of states he was governed in his organizational activities not only by the practical considerations of the moment, but by certain higher principles and ideas that comprised a harmonious system.

Why War?

At the time of Genghis Khan's birth the nomads of the eastern steppes lived in a feudal society. Each tribe was led by its khan, and were divided into clans which formed an *ordu*, the Mongol word for a camp (and source of the English word horde). Within the *ordu* each family lived in a *yurt*, a tent made of felt stretched over a wooden frame, and even for the rich families, life was often frugal: at the end of winter when the preservation of the herds was of paramount importance they would travel for several days without eating in search of fresh pasture and game. For the many poor, life was always squalid. The men of the clan spent their time hunting, tending their herds and fighting: a man's survival may have depended on his ability as a horseman and an archer, but his success depended on his strength as a warrior and his cunning as a bandit. Since the easiest way to acquire more horses and cattle was to steal them and the simplest way to look after them was to have it done for you by slaves, the nomad clans were constantly raiding each other. But the objectives of these raids was sometimes even more than the capture of animals and able-bodied men: the nomad warriors were polygamous and tradition forbade them to marry within their own clan.

Genghis Khan's Genius for Organization

Once Genghis Khan had united the tribes by force of arms, he began to suppress those customs that preserved their poverty and discord. He forbade any man to own a Mongol slave, made cattle-theft and

kidnapping punishable by death, and, to spread among all the Mongol people the loyalty that had previously been limited to members of the same clan, divided the clansmen among the different units of his new army. It was to be an army for which the keen-eyed mounted archers were almost perfect raw material. The life that had given them their incomparable powers of endurance had also made them sullen, fatalistic, phlegmatic and callous. They could suffer without complaint and kill without pity and they were easily led. In an age when conditions in the camps of campaigning armies were often appalling, Mongol soldiers would live as they had always lived in the yurts of their *ordu*. To turn these reckless warriors into disciplined soldiers required only organization and tactical training.

It was Genghis Khan's genius for organization that was to turn a confederation into a nation. It was called Mongol after his own tribe. It was the cohesion and persistence that he inspired and the structured military society that he left behind that were to distinguish the Mongol conquerors from the other nomad raiders...

All men in the Mongol Empire over the age of twenty, except physicians, priests of any religion and those who washed the bodies of the dead, were liable for military service. When messengers brought the order to mobilize, trained men would collect their weapons and equipment from the officer in charge of the armory in their *ordu*, select a small herd of horses and set out to join their unit.

The Bow

The bow was easily the Mongols' most important weapon. The mediaeval English longbow had a pull of 75 pounds and a range of up to 250 yards, but the smaller bows used by the Mongols had a pull of between 100-150 pounds and a range of over 350 yards. The velocity was further increased by the difficult technique known as the Mongolian thumb lock: the string was drawn back by a stone ring worn on the right thumb which released it more suddenly than the fingers. A soldier could bend and string his bow in the saddle by placing one end between his foot and the stirrup and he could shoot in any direction at full gallop, carefully timing his release to come between the paces of his horse, so that his aim would not be deflected as the hooves pounded the ground.

Whenever possible Mongols preferred to ride mares, since their milk as well as their blood, and in the last resort their flesh, provided them with everything they needed to survive. The Mongol nomads valued their horses far above all other possessions. Horses played their part in traditional ceremonies and folklore and there was a whole period in Chinese art when all the statues and paintings were of horses, since the Mongol patrons desired nothing else. War horses were treated with the same sentimental respect as any other comrade in arms. A horse that had been ridden in battle was never killed for food and when it became old or lame it was put out to grass, although when a soldier died his favorite horse was killed and buried with him so that their spirits would ride together.

To their enemies, the inexplicable coordination with which Mongol armies achieved their separate and common objectives was often astounding. Although their battlefield tactics were no more than the adaptation and perfection of those that had been developed by nomad archers over the past seven or eight hundred years, each carefully-designed campaign was a masterpiece of original and imaginative strategy and Mongol commanders could not have planned with as much breadth and daring as they did without absolute confidence in their communications. The Mongol army was a 'modern' army and the differences between it and the armies of the twentieth century can all be accounted for by progress in science and in technology, but not in the art of war.

3. GENGHIS'S MORAL DEMANDS

Trubetzkoy, N.S., The Legacy of Genghis Khan: A Perspective on Russian History not from the West but from the East, in *Cross Currents* 9, 1990, pp. 22, 23, 26. Reprinted by permission of *Cross Currents*.)

Genghis Khan made certain moral demands upon his subjects from the highest of the nobles and military leaders down to ordinary soldiers. The virtues he valued and encouraged most were loyalty, devotion, and

steadfastness; the vices he particularly despised were treachery and cowardice. These virtues and vices were the indicators he used to divide all people into two categories. For one type, material well-being and safety is more important than personal dignity and honor; consequently they are capable of cowardice and treachery. Such people are base, craven, they are slaves by nature. Genghis Khan despised them and destroyed them without mercy. The kind of people valued by Genghis Khan placed their honor and personal dignity above safety and comfort.

Having divided human beings into two psychological categories, Genghis Khan made this division the cornerstone of his state organization. He controlled those with the psychology of slaves the only way they can be controlled, by material rewards and by fear. The simple fact that the the territory of Eurasia was unified into one sate and that safety along the Eurasian trade routes and the regulation of finances were guaranteed, created such beneficial economic conditions for the inhabitants of Genghis Khan's empire that their efforts to achieve material well-being could meet with complete success.

As Genghis Kahn applied his theory of the state to concrete situations, as he implemented it in the real conditions of conquered countries, he was guided by the conviction that people possessing the psychological traits valued by him were to be found primarily among the nomads, while settled societies consisted for the most part of people with the psychology of slaves. And indeed, the nomad is basically far less attached to material possessions than the townsman or peasant. By nature averse to sustained physical labor, the nomad at the same time places little value on physical comfort and is accustomed to limiting his needs without considering his limitation an especially onerous deprivation. He is not accustomed to struggling with the forces of nature for his subsistence, and thus looks upon his own well-being fatalistically. The nomad's wealth consists of his livestock. If this wealth is to be destroyed by disease, there is absolutely nothing he can do to prevent this misfortune. Livestock could be taken by an enemy, but by the same token one might be able to seize the enemy's livestock the next time around. Both possibilities depend upon one's prowess in battle, and also upon the very existence of friendly and hostile relations governed by customary law and by a sense of decency and honor. For this reason the nomad places special value on a man's military prowess and on his willingness to keep his word or an agreement. All these factors created conditions congenial to the development of the psychology that Genghis Khan considered especially valuable.

Thus, in accordance with Genghis Khan's state ideology, the power of the ruler must rest, not upon some ruling class, estate, nation, or official religion, but upon people of a specific psychological type. The highest positions in his state could be occupied not only by aristocrats but by persons of humble origin. The rulers belonged to various Mongolian and Turko-Tatar tribes, and they were adherents of various religions. The practical implementation of these ideas in the real conditions of the countries constituting Genghis Khan's empire produced a ruling class recruited from among the nomads, each representative of which was a zealous adherent of some religion, while all religions were encouraged.

4. ALL THE KHAN'S HORSES

(Morris Rossabi, All the Khan's Horses, in *Natural History* 10/94, pp. 49-50, 54-56. Reprinted with permission from *Natural History*, copyright the American Museum of Natural History, 1994)

Although Chinggis Khan's armies probably never numbered more than 200,000 troops, they may have had as many as 800,000 horses. Thirteenth-century sources, including The Secret History of the Mongols, *give a tantalizing account of the training of Mongol horses. Captured in the wild and broken in during the first two years of their lives, the young horses were then allowed to graze for three years. At the age of five they were once again ridden and prepared for combat. The Mongols depended on their horses so much, and gathered so many of them, that John of Plano Carpini, a papal emissary to the Mongol court from AD 1246 to 1247, noted with amazement that "they have such a number of horses and mares that I do not believe there are so many in all the rest of the world."*

Chinggis Khan and his descendants could not have conquered, and ruled the largest land empire in world history without their diminutive but extremely hardy steeds. Mongols held these horses in highest regard and accorded them great spiritual significance. Before setting forth on military expeditions, for example, commanders would scatter mare's milk on the earth to insure victory. In rituals, horses were sacrificed to provide "transport" to heaven.

The Mongols prized their horses primarily for combat because the horses were fast and flexible, and Chinggis Khan was the first leader to capitalize fully on these strengths. After hit-and-run raids, for example, his horsemen could race back and quickly disappear into their native steppes.

Enemy armies from the sedentary agricultural societies to the south frequently had to abandon their pursuit because they were not accustomed to long rides on horseback and thus could not move as quickly. Nor could these farmer-soldiers leave their fields for extended periods to chase after the Mongols.

The Mongols had developed a composite bow made out of sinew and horn and were skilled at shooting it while riding, which gave them the upper hand against ordinary foot soldiers. With a range of more than 350 yards. The bow was superior to the contemporaneous English longbow, whose range was only 250 yards. A wood-and-leather saddle, which was rubbed with sheep's fat to prevent cracking and shrinkage, allowed the horses to bear the weight of their riders for long periods and also permitted the riders to retain a firm seat. Their saddlebags contained cooking pots, dried meat, yogurt, water bottles, and others essentials for lengthy expeditions. Finally, a sturdy stirrup enabled horsemen to be steadier and thus more accurate in shooting when mounted. A Chinese chronicler recognized the horse's value to the Mongols, observing that "by nature they (the Mongols) are good at riding and shooting. Therefore they took possession of the world through this advantage of bow and horse."

Chinggis Khan understood the importance of horses and insisted that his troops be solicitous of their steeds. A cavalryman normally had three or four, so that each was, at one time or another, given a respite from bearing the weight of the rider during a lengthy journey. Before combat, leather coverings were placed on the head of each horse and its body was covered with armor. After combat, Mongol horses could traverse the most rugged terrain and survive on little fodder.

According to Marco Polo, the horse also provided sustenance to its rider on long strips during which all the food had been consumed. On such occasions, the rider would cut the horse's veins and drink the blood that spurted forth. Marco Polo reported, perhaps with some exaggeration, that a horseman could, by nourishing himself on his horse's blood, " ride quite ten days marches without eating any cooked food and without lighting a fire." And because its milk offered additional sustenance during extended military campaigns, a cavalryman usually preferred a mare as mount. The milk was often fermented to produce *kumiss*, or *araq*, a potent alcoholic drink liberally consumed by the Mongols. In short, as one commander stated. "If the horse dies, I die; if it lives, I survive."

The Battle of the Kalka River

Mobility and surprise characterized the military expeditions led by Chinggis Khan and his commanders, and the horse was crucial for such tactics and strategy. Horses could, without exaggeration, be referred to as the intercontinental ballistic missiles of the thirteenth century. The battle of the Kalka River (now renamed the Kalmyus River) in southern Russia is a good example of the kind of campaign Chinggis Khan waged to gain territory and of the key role of the horse.

After his relatively easy conquest of Central Asia from AD 1219 to 1220, Chinggis Khan had dispatched about 30,000 troops led by Jebe and Subedei, two of his ablest commanders, to conduct an exploratory foray to the west. In an initial engagement, the Mongols, appearing to retreat, lured a much larger detachment of Georgian cavalry on a chase. When the Mongols sensed that the Georgian horses were exhausted, they headed to where they kept reserve horses, quickly switched to them, and charged at the

bedraggled, spread-out Georgians. Archers, who had been hiding with the reserve horses, backed up the cavalry-with a barrage of arrows as they routed the Georgians.

Continuing their exploration, the Mongol detachment crossed the Caucasus Mountains. They wound up just north of the Black Sea on rich pastureland for their horses. After a brief respite, they attacked several sites inciting Russian retaliation in 1223 under Matislav the Daring, who had a force of 80,000 men. Jebe and Subedei commanded no more than 20,000 troops and were outnumbered by a ratio of four to one.

Knowing that an immediate, direct clash could be disastrous, the Mongols again used their tactic of feigned withdrawal. They retreated for more than a week, because they wanted to be certain that the opposing army continued to pursue them but was spaced out over a considerable distance. At the Kaka River, the Mongols finally took a stand, swerving around and positioning themselves in battle formation, with archers mounted on horses in the front.

Mongol Archers and Heavy Cavalry

The Mongols' retreat seems to have lulled the Russians into believing that the invaders from the East were in disarray. Matislav the Daring ordered the advance troops to charge immediately. This decision proved to be calamitous. Mongol archers on their well-trained steeds crisscrossed the Russian route of attack, shooting their arrows with great precision. The Russian line of troops was disrupted, and the soldiers scattered.

After their attack, the archers turned the battlefield over to the Mongol heavy cavalry, which pummeled the already battered, disunited, and scattered Russians. Wearing an iron helmet, a shirt of raw silk, a coat of mail, and a cuirass, each Mongol in the heavy cavalry carried with him two bows, a dagger, a battle-ax, a twelve-foot lance, and a lasso as his principal weapons. Using lances, the detachment of heavy cavalry rapidly attacked and overwhelmed the Russian vanguard, which had been cut off from the rest of their forces in the very beginning of the battle.

Rejoined by the mounted archers, the combined Mongol force mowed down the straggling remnants of the Russian forces. Without an escape route, most were killed, and the rest were captured. Rather than shed the blood of rival princes – one of Chinggis Khan's commands–Jebe and Subedei ordered the unfortunate commander and two other princes stretched out under boards and slowly suffocated as Mongols stood or sat upon the boards during the victory banquet.

The Death of Chinggis Khan

The battle at the Kalka River resembled, with some slight deviations, the general plan of most of Chinggis Khan's campaigns. In less than two decades, Chinggis Khan had, with the support of powerful cavalry, laid the foundations for an empire that was to control and govern much of Asia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. He died on a campaign in Central Asia, and his underlings decided to return his corpse to his native land. Any unfortunate individual who happened to encounter the funeral cortege was immediately killed because the Mongols wished to conceal the precise location of the burial site. At least forty horses were reputedly sacrificed at Chinggis Khan's tomb; his trusted steeds would be as important to him in the afterlife as in his lifetime.

5. WOMEN OF THE MONGOL COURT

(These edited notes were taken from a lecture by Morris Rossabi, presented as part of the lecture series in conjunction with Mongolia: The legacy of Chinggis Khan, an exhibition at the Denver Art Museum. Reprinted with permission from the author.)

In a nomadic society each member of the society was critical to the survival of the group. Another explanation for Mongol success is that women played a very important role in the economy, and they took care of the animals if need be. The Mongols had total male mobility for warfare and women were trained for the military. Mongol women had rights and privileges that were not accorded to most East Asian women, including the right to own property and to divorce. Although we don't know about ordinary Mongol women, we do know

about prominent Mongol women among the elite. They were mentioned repeatedly in Mongol, Chinese, and European chronicles of the 13th century.

Sorghaghtani Beki

Probably the most famous of these women was Kublai Khan's mother, Chinggis Khan's daughter-in-law, sorghaghtani Beki. She is mentioned in so many sources as one of the great figures of the 13th century that we are assured that she was as remarkable as she is portrayed. European missionaries who visited the Mongols in the middle of the 13th century remarked that she was the most renowned of the Mongols. Persians wrote about her. A Middle Eastern physician wrote that "if I were to see among the race of women another who is so remarkable a woman as this, I would say that the race of women is superior to the race of men."

She set the stage for all four of her sons to become khans. Although she herself was illiterate she recognized that her sons had to be educated. Each one learned a different language that the Mongols needed in administering the vast domain that they had conquered. Although she was a Nestorian Christian, she recognized that if the Mongols were to administer this vast empire that they had subjugated, that one of the ways of doing so was to ingratiate themselves to the clergy of these various religions. So she and her sons protected and provided support for each of the religions within the Mongol domains. She supported Muslims, Buddhists, and Confucianists. She introduced her son Kublai to the ideas of Confucian scholars to help him understand and be prepared to rule China. Her third contribution to Mongol rule was that she recognized that pure exploitation of subjected peoples would make no sense. Ravaging the economy of the conquered territories would ultimately be self defeating. Instead of turning China into one big pastureland, she supported the Chinese peasantry. If the Mongols bolstered the local economy, eventually that would lead to increased production and increased tax collections. Each of her sons followed the same philosophy. Religious toleration, support of the religions, support of the indigenous economy, and literacy – all proved crucial to her son Kublai, the man who really bridged the transition from nomadic steppe conquest to governance of the domains the Mongols had conquered.

Kublai identified with the Chinese. He realized he would have to make concessions to the Chinese in order to rule China. There was no way for the Mongols to succeed on their own. 10 million people can't be ruled with a couple of tens of thousands Mongols. Mongols had no experience collecting taxes. In order to get that support from the Chinese, he began to act like a typical Chinese emperor. In the 1260's he began to restore Confucian rituals to the court. He moved the capital from Mongolia into China. He was responsible for selecting the site of Beijing as the site for the center of the Mongolian Empire. He patronized painting and painters in the Chinese tradition and supported Chinese drama. Chinese theater went through a tremendous cultural efflorescence during Kublia Khan's era.

Chabi

In all of these efforts he was helped by his wife Chabi who played as important a rule as his mother had done. Chabi supported Tibetan monks who began converting the Mongol elite to Tibetan Buddhism When Kublia conquered southern China, Chabi was influential in preventing revenge. She took measures to maintain the Song imperial family, to provide them with funds and a palace, not to enslave them or kill them. She too played a critical role in Mongol rule.

Khutulun

One other extraordinary woman in Kublai khan's era was Kublai's niece Khutulun. She relished the military life and loved combat. She even impressed Marco Polo who described her as so strong and brave that in all of her father's army no man could out do her in feats of strength. Her parents were a little concerned when she didn't marry by the age of 22 or 23. They were constantly beseeching her to enter into a marriage arrangement. She said she would only consent if a prospective suitor bested her in a contest of physical strength. She agreed to accept any challenge as long as the young man gambled 100 horses for the chance to beat her. Within a short time she accumulated about

10,000 horses... Finally a very handsome, confident, skillful young prince arrived at the court to challenge her. He was so confident of victory that he gambled a thousand horses rather than just the 100 she demanded. He bet the could beat her in a wrestling match. The night before the contest, Khutulun's parents implored their daughter to let herself be vanquished. But she would have none of that. She said that if she were vanquished in a fair contest, she would gladly be his wife but otherwise she wouldn't do it. So on the day of the wrestling match, the contestants appeared pretty evenly matched. The combatants grappled for quite a time. Then in a sudden movement, she flipped the prince over and won the contest. The prince took off and left the 1000 horses behind. She actually never did marry. She accompanied her father on all of his campaigns.

While some of the stories may be hyperbolic, what they are telling us is that women in the elite were confident, were not about to be bowled over by men, and played an important role in Mongol society. There is so much emphasis on women playing military, political, and economic roles in this period that we're fairly sure this stretched beyond the elite woman. It trickled down to ordinary women as well. Interestingly enough, by the 14th century, there are no more Mongol women playing roles as leaders. They become increasingly acculturated. In the next generation after Khubilai Khan, the daughters and granddaughters of Kublai Khan are no longer as prominent. They began accepting some of the restraints imposed on Chinese women. In that sense alone, the Mongols were very much influenced by China.

6. OF THE CAPTURE OF BOKHARA

'Ala-ad-Din 'Ata-Malik Juvaini, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, Vol. I, Translated by Boyle, John A, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958, pp. xv-xxxv, 98-108, Reprinted by permission of UNESCO)

It is hard to see how anything of worth could be written now about the Mongolian Empire if the Persian chronicles of the period had not survived. 'Ala-ad-Din 'Ata-Malik Juvaini attempted to write a comprehensive History of the World Conqueror. *From his work we learn not only about the early career and conquests of Chengiz Khan but also about the Mongols' nomadic way of life, their methods of warfare, and their laws and customs. In his book, Juvaini compares the Mongolian invasion with the punishments visited on earlier peoples for their disobedience to God and in support of this analogy adduces a* hadith *or tradition of Mohammed to the effect that the destruction of the Moslems was to be by the sword. Another* hadith *refers to the horsemen whom God will send to exact vengeance on the wicked, and nothing was easier than to identify those horsemen with the Mongols. And to drive the point home, the Conqueror himself, in a speech directed to the people of Bokhara, is made to declare that he is the scourge of God. This divine mission of the Mongols was particularly manifest in their destruction of the foes of Islam. Thus it was God who dispatched them against Küchlüg, the Naiman ruler of Qara-Khitai, who had crucified a Moslem divine upon the door of his madrasa; and the people of Kashghar, when the Mongols had expelled their prosecutor and restored freedom of worship, perceived 'the existence of this people to be one of the mercies of the Lord and one of the bounties of divine grace'. God's purpose was also revealed in Hülegü's capture of the Isma'ili stronghold of Alamut, which Juvaini compares with the conquest of Khaibar, i.e. the Prophet's defeat and extermination of his Jewish adversaries at Khaibar near Medina. But their mission was not merely negative; their conquests actually had the effect of extending the boundaries of Islam. The transportation of craftsmen, saved by their skill from the fate of their fellow townsmen, to new homes in Eastern Asia, and the thronging of merchants to the new capital at Qara-Qorum had introduced a Moslem population to regions to which the True Faith had never penetrated. The following is Juvaini's description of the Mongol's capture of the city of Bukhara.*

Chingiz-Khan, having completed the organization and equipment of his armies, arrived in the countries of the Sultan; and dispatching his elder sons and the *noyans* in every direction at the head of large forces, he himself advanced first upon Bokhara, being accompanied by Toli alone of his elder sons and by a host of fearless Turks that knew not clean from unclean, and considered the bowl of war to be a basin of rich soup and held a mouthful of the sword to be a beaker of wine.

He proceeded along the road to Zarnuq, and in the morning when the king of the planets raised his banner on the eastern horizon, he arrived unexpectedly before the town. When the inhabitants thereof, who were unaware of the fraudulent designs of Destiny, beheld the surrounding countryside choked with horsemen and the air black as night with the dust of cavalry, fright and panic overcame them, and fear and dread prevailed. They betook themselves to the citadel and closed the gates, thinking, ' This is perhaps a single detachment of a great army and a single wave from a raging sea.' It was their intention to resist and to approach calamity on their own feet, but they were aided by divine grace so that they stood firm and breathed not opposition. At this juncture, the World-Emperor, in accordance with his constant practice, dispatched Danishmand Hajib upon an embassy to them, to announce the arrival of his forces and to advise them to stand out of the way of a dreadful deluge. Some of the inhabitants, who were in the category of 'Satan hath gotten mastery over them ', were minded to do him harm and mischief; whereupon he raised a shout, saying: "I am such-and-such a person, a Moslem and the son of a Moslem. Seeking God's pleasure I am come on an embassy to you, at the inflexible command of Chingiz-Khan, to draw you out of the whirpool of destruction and the trough of blood. It is Chingiz Khan himself who has come with many thousands of warriors. The battle has reached thus far. If you are incited to resist in any way, in an hour's time your citadel will be level ground and the plain a sea of blood. But if you will listen to advice and exhortation with the ear of intelligence and consideration and become submissive and obedient to his command, your lives and property will remain in the stronghold of security." People held it proper to choose peace and advantageous to accept advice... The chief men of Zarnuq sent forward a delegation bearing presents.

Tayir Bahadur was proceeding in advance of the main forces. When he and his men drew near to the town of Nur they passed through some gardens. During the night they felled the trees and fashioned ladders out of them. Then holding the ladders in front of their horses they advanced very slowly; and the watcher on the walls thought that they were a caravan of merchants, until in this manner they arrived at the gates of the citadel of Nur; when the day of that people was darkened and their eyes dimmed.

7. KHUBILAI KHAN AND FURTHER EXPANSION OF THE EMPIRE

(Morris Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, pp. 1-2. Reprinted with Permission. Copyright of the University of California Press.)

In his preface to his book on Khubilai Khan, Professor Rossabi stresses he was a real person, not mythical and legendary. He lived from AD 1215 (the year of the Magna Carta in England) to 1294. The empire which he ruled had been created by his grandfather, Chingis Khan, who seized Peking the year of Khubilai's birth. Khubilai differed from the earlier Mongols – he was the first to make the transition from nomadic steppe – conqueror to the ruler of a sedentary society. During his reign in China he constructed a capital city, developed a legal code as well as a new legal script for all the languages in the Mongol domains; and heavily patronized the theater, the arts, the sciences and medicine. The Yüan shih, *the Chinese dynastic history that documents his 34 year reign as Emperor of China, gives an excellent picture of court events, emphasizing the bureaucracy of the Chinese court. There is little information about the Great Khan in Mongol histories but the accounts of historians and travelers who visited his court are among the excellent sources now available. The passages excerpted from Prof. Rossabi's book attempt to present a more human quality to the figure of Khubilai, the Great Khan.*

Khubilai Khan lived during the height of Mongol power. He was born at the beginning of the Mongol expansion and grew up as Mongol armies spread far to the north and west. Within a few decades in the 13th century, they [the Mongols] had carved out the most sizeable empire in world history, stretching from Korea to Western Russia and from Burma to Iraq. Chigis' son Ogodei continued with the conquest of the Chin Dynasty in 1234 and occupation of all of North China; in 1238 the king of Korea was forced to pay tribute to the Mongols; beginning in 1237, the Mongols campaigned against Russia, using Mongol, Turkic and Persian troops, occupying Moscow by March 1238 and Kiev by December 1238; they overtook Poland in spring 1241 and then turned to Hungary.

Khubilai was born on September 23, 1215 AD, the year Chingis Khan seized Peking. His upbringing was left to his mother – learning to ride, shoot arrows and to be literate. Travelers to the Mongol lands consdered her an exceptional woman and gave her much credit for Khubilai's upbringing.

In 1252, Möngke selected his brother Khubilai to lead an expedition to Yünnan Province. Khubilai was familiar with working with the Chinese because of his holdings in North China. The opportunity in Yünnan would allow him to control the trade to Burma and Southwest China. At the age of 36, he was given an opportunity. The campaign was a success, extending Mongol control in S.W. China, allowing them to launch an invasion of Southern China and trade with Burma and India. Khubilai now refocused his attention to ruling his domains in Northern China. The death of Möngke ended the Mongol plans for further expansion in the Middle East and Asia Minor. A struggle for succession broke out between Khubilai and Arigh Böke, another brother of Möngke. Arigh Böke spoke against his brother but by the spring of 1260 numerous princes urged Khubilai to accept the leadership of the Mongol world and on May 5th he was elected Great Khan, even though the election did not take place in the Mongol homelands.

Khubilai's election was immediately contested, especially by the more conservative Mongols who were suspicious of his identification with China as well as native Chinese who despised his rule. Khubilai was left isolated. His strategy was to align himself with the Chinese emperors of the past, maintaining a sage was needed to unite the Chinese people. He promised to rule China in accordance with the traditions of the ancestors, He adopted a Chinese reign title *Chung-t'ung* (Central Rule).

To enhance his credibility as a ruler of the Mongol and Chinese worlds, Khubilai needed to pursue an assertive, even aggressive foreign policy. His principal objective was to overwhelm the Southern Sung. A second objective was to provide for the security of his borders, especially those in the northwest. The conquest of southern China was the first objective. Merchants from South China had developed lucrative trade with Southeast Asia, India and even the Middle East. Moreover, the land of the south was fertile and could provide food for the northern population, always faced with food shortages. But the Mongols realized that conquest of the south would be difficult for a number of reasons: (a) the heat was unfamiliar to the Mongols; (b) the terrain was forested rather than steppe lands; (c) there were parasites unknown to the northerners; (d) the south had a navy and the Mongols, inland people, had no knowledge of naval affairs. The Sung could control the seas and that would defuse the Mongols' advantage in cavalry and land warfare.

Khubilai came to realize that to defeat the Sung would require a strong waterborne force as well as ships either built or captured. One Chinese historian said, "The alacrity with which the Mongols, a nation of horsemen unacquainted with the sea, took to naval warfare was amazing." The defeat of the Song was accomplished by 1276. The Mongols now controlled the land with the largest population in the world although Mongol rule over China lasted for less than 100 years.

The Submission of Korea: Khubilai realized that he could control Korea through tribute, rather than directly. He cooperated with the Korean royalty and received tribute and gifts in return, considering Korea his "vassal" state. In fact, he even arranged a dynastic marriage between his granddaughter and the Korean crown prince. The Koreans sent sumptuous gifts to the Mongols – gold on porcelain, furs, fish skins for special shoes for Khubilai, and medicines. The Korean were also required to set up postal stations and provision Mongol soldiers in Korea. Korean women were sent to the Mongol camp to serve in the harem or as slaves or servant girls. By 1273, Korea was fully pacified and the Mongols had enforced economic and military demands on the Koreans.

The Invasion of Japan: Khubilai was eager to establish a tributary relationship with Japan but the Koreans did not wish to be intermediaries in that effort. In 1266 Khubilai sent envoys to Japan informing the Japanese of the new dynasty in China and asking them to send tribute. The Bakufu had no intention to giving in to the Mongols. Khubilai was convinced he was rebuffed by the Japanese, and planned to invade Japan. The story is

well known. In 1274, a mission of 15,000 Mongol, Chinese and Jurchen soldiers as well as about 8,000 disgruntled Korean sailors departed for Japan on hundreds of large and small ships. The Mongols planned to attack from Kyūshū where the Japanese were at a vast disadvantage. But nature provided protection for the Japanese. A gale-storm erupted. The Koreans told the Mongols they needed to head for sea until the storm subsided and the Mongols agreed. The bulk of the Mongol casualties were suffered that night when the wind, the waves and the rocks shattered the ships and lives were lost. The storm saved the Japanese. What was left of the force sailed for home. At that time Khubilai was distracted by serious challenges from Central Asia and he turned away from a conquest of Japan.

The Emperor of China: By 1279 Khubilai had established himself as the Emperor of China, appealing to a wide variety of occupations and groups as well as religious sects and cults. He had constructed a capital and installed some Confucian rituals in his court. Khubilai wished to be perceived both as the legitimate Khan of Khans of the Mongols and as the Emperor of China. He kept China as his main base, concerned with the interests of his Chinese subjects as well as using the resources of the empire to increase his own wealth. As a cultural patron, he was eager to establish his own identity as well as carry forth Mongol culture. It was in the fields of painting and crafts that the Mongols gave the greatest support. Khubilai had taken the art collection of the Southern Song and cherished Chinese painting.

Through all of these actions, Khubilai won the support of the Chinese people. At the same time, he preserved the Mongol heritage, making careful distinctions between Chinese customs and ceremonies and those that were Mongol. Mongols often wore their own clothing, which the Great Khan could dress in Chinese style. Most of the food at celebrations and feasts was meat, and indication of the Mongol nomadic background. He vigorously defended Mongol traditions, while also embracing Chinese culture.

8. WHO WAS MARCO POLO?

(*The Travels of Marco Polo,* Introduction by John Masefield, London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1954, Introduction. Permission pending)

Marco Polo was born at Venice in the year 1254. In the year 1260, his father Nicolo Polo and his uncle set out across the Euxine on a trading venture to the Crimea. They prospered in their trading business, but were unable to return to their base, owing to the breaking out of a Tartar war on the road by which they had come. As they could not go back, they went forward, crossing the desert to Bokhara, where they stayed for three years. At the end of the third year (the fifth of their journey) they were advised to visit the Great Khan Kublai, the "Kubla Khan" of Coleridge's poem. The brothers traveled for a whole year, before they reached the Khan's Court in Cathay. The Khan received them kindly, and asked them many questions about life in Europe, especially about the emperors, the Pope, the Church, and "all that is done at Rome." He then sent them back to Europe on an embassy to the Pope, to ask His Holiness to send a hundred missionaries to convert the Cathaians to the Christian faith. He also asked for some of the holy oil from the lamp of the Holy Sepulchre. The return journey of the brothers (from Cathay to Acre) took three years. On their arrival at Acre the travelers discovered that the Pope was dead. They therefore decided to return home to Venice to wait until the new Pope should be elected. They arrived at Venice in 1269, to find that Nicolo's wife had died during her husband's absence. His son Marco, our traveler, was then fifteen years old.

The new Pope did not send a hundred missionaries, as Kublai had asked, but he appointed instead two preaching friars, who accompanied the Polos as far as Armenia, where rumors of war frightened them into returning. The Polos journeyed on for three years and a half, and arrived at the Khan's court in the middle of 1275. The Khan received them "honorably and graciously," making much of Marco, "who was then a young gallant." In a little while, when Marco had learned the speech and customs of the "Tartars," the Khan employed him in public business, sending him as a visiting administrator to several wild and distant

provinces. Marco noted carefully the strange customs of these provinces, and delighted the Khan with his account of them. On one of these journeys Marco probably visited the southern states of India.

After some seventeen years of service with Kublai, the three Venetians became eager to return to Venice. Kublai refused to allow them to leave the Court, and even "appeared hurt at the application." At this time, Arghun, Khan of Persia, had sent ambassadors to Kublai to obtain the hand of a maiden from among the relatives of his deceased wife." Because overland routes to Persia were unsafe, the maiden had to travel by ship. The envoys begged that Kublai let the three Venetians come with them in the ships "as being persons well skilled in the practice of navigation." Kublai fitted out a splendid squadron of ships, and despatched the three Venetians with the Persians, first granting them the golden tablet of safe conduct, which would enable them to obtain supplies on the way.

The voyage to Persia occupied about two years, during which time the expedition lost six hundred men. The Khan of Persia was dead when they arrived; so the beautiful maiden was handed over to his son, who received her kindly. He gave the Venetians safe-conduct through Persia; indeed he sent them forward with troops and horses, without which, in those troubled days, they could never have crossed the country. As they rode on their way they heard that the great Khan Kublai, their old master, had died. They arrived safely at Venice some time in the year 1295. There Marco Polo became a prisoner of war with Genoa. During his three years in prison he wrote his book *The Travels*, which he dictated to a fellow-prisoner.

Marco Polo's book was not received with faith by his contemporaries. Travellers who see marvelous things, even in our own day are seldom believed by those who have stayed at home. When Marco Polo came back from the East, a misty, unknown country, full of splendor and terrors, he could not tell the whole truth. He had to leave his tale half told lest he should lack believers. His book was less popular in the later Middle Ages than the fictions and plagiarisms of Sir John Mandeville. Marco Polo tells of what he saw; the compiler of Mandeville, when he does not steal openly from Pliny, Friar Odoric, and others, tells of what an ignorant person might expect to see, and would, in any case, like to read about, since it is always pleasant to be confirmed in an opinion, however ill-grounded it may be. How little Marco Polo was credited may be judged from the fact that the map of Asia was not modified by his discoveries till fifty years after his death. However, his book remains one of the great travel narratives.

It is accounted a romantic thing to wander among strangers and to eat one's bread by the camp-fires of the other half of the world. There is romance in doing thus, though the romance has been over-estimated by those whose sedentary lives have created in them a false taste for action. Marco Polo wandered among strangers; but it is open to anyone to do the same. Wandering in itself is merely a form of self-indulgence. If it adds not to the stock of human knowledge, or if it gives not to others the imaginative possession of some part of the world, it is a pernicious habit. The acquisition of knowledge, the accumulation of fact, is noble only in those few who have that alchemy which transmutes such clay to heavenly eternal gold. It may be thought that many travelers have given their readers great imaginative possessions; but the imaginative possession is not measured in miles and parasangs, nor do the people of that country write accounts of birds and beasts. It is only the wonderful traveler who sees a wonder, and only five travelers in the world's history have seen wonders. The others have seen birds and beasts, rivers and wastes, the earth and the (local) fulness thereof. The five travelers are Herodotus, Gaspar, Melchior, Balthazar, and Marco Polo himself. The wonder of Marco Polo is that he created Asia for the European mind.

The Polos did not find the Earthly Paradise; but they saw the splendors of Kublai, one of the mightiest of earthly kings. It makes us proud and reverent of the poetic gift, to reflect that this king, "the lord of lords," ruler of so many cities, so many gardens, so many fish pools, would be but a name, an image covered by the sands, had he not welcomed two dusty travelers, who

came to him one morning from out of the unknown, after long wandering over the world. Perhaps when he bade them farewell the thought occurred to him that he might come to be remembered "but by this one thing," when all his glories were fallen from him, and he lay silent, the gold mask upon his face, in the drowsy tomb, where the lamp, long kept alight, at last guttered, and died, and fell to dust.

9. THE GREAT KHAN THROUGH MARCO POLO'S EYES

(*The Travels of Marco Polo*, Translated and with an introduction by Ronald Latham, London: Penguin Books, 1958, pp.113-162. Permission pending)

Khubilai Khan and his Army

The title *Khan* means, in our language, "Great Lord of Lords." And certainly he has every right to this title; for everyone should know that this Great Khan is the mightiest man, whether in respect of subjects or of territory or of treasure, who is in the world today or who ever has been, from Adam our first parent down to the present moment. And I will make it quite dear to you in our book that this is the plain truth, so that everyone will be convinced that he is indeed the greatest lord the world has ever known. Here, then, is my proof.

First, you should know that he is undoubtedly descended in the direct imperial line from Chinghiz Khan; for only one of that lineage may be Lord of all the Tartars. He is sixth in succession of the Great Khans of all the Tartars, having received the lordship and begun his reign in the year of Christ's nativity 1256. He won the lordship by his own valour and prowess and good sense; his kinsfolk and brothers tried to debar him from it, but by his great prowess he won it. And you must know that it was properly his by right. From the beginning of his reign down to the present year 1298 is a period of forty-two years. His age today may well be as much as eighty-five years. Before he became Khan, he used to go out regularly on military expeditions and he showed himself a valiant soldier and a good commander.

...[*The next few passages talk about a ploy arranged by Khubilai's uncle Nayan to attack the Great Khan, who was*] a young man of thirty with so many man at his command...[*Khubilai decided to forestall his uncle's ploy and prepared for a counter attack. A passage follows describing the need to station armies throughout the empire to keep peace*]

...When the Great Khan had mustered the mere handful of men of which I have spoken, he consulted his astrologers to learn whether he would defeat his enemies and bring his affairs to a happy issue. They assured him that he would deal with his enemies as he pleased. Thereupon he set out with all his forces and went on until after twenty days they came to a great plain where Nayan lay with all his forces, who were not less than 400,000 horsemen. They arrived early in the morning and caught the enemy completely unawares; the Great Khan had had all the roads so carefully watched that no one could come or go without being intercepted, and had thus ensured that the enemy had no suspicion of their approach. Indeed, when they arrived Nayan was in his tent – dallying in bed with his wife, to whom he was greatly attached.

What more shall I say? When the day of battle dawned, the Great Khan suddenly appeared on a mound that rose from the plain where Nayan's forces were bivouacked. They were quite at their ease, like men who had not the faintest suspicion that anyone was approaching with hostile intent. Indeed they felt so secure that they had posted no sentries round their camp and sent out no patrols to van or rear. And suddenly there was the Great Khan on the hill I have mentioned. He stood on the top of a wooden tower, full of crossbowmen and archers, which was carried by four elephants wearing stout leather azmour draped with cloths of silk and gold. Above his head flew his banner with the emblem of the sun and moon, so high that it could he clearly seen on every side. His troops were marshalled in thirty squadrons of 10,000 mounted archers each, grouped in three divisions; and those on the left and right he flung out so that they encircled Nayan's camp in a moment. In front of every squadron of horse were 500 foot-soldiers with short pikes and swords. They were so trained that, whenever the cavalry

purposed a retreat, they would jump on the horses' cruppers and flee with them; then, when the retreat was halted, they would dismount and slaughter the enemies' horses with their pikes. Such, then, was the formation in which the Great Khan's forces were drawn up round Nayan's camp in readiness for battle.

When both parties were lined up in battle array, so that nothing remained but to come to blows, then might be heard a tumult of many instruments, the shrilling of fifes and sound of men singing at the pitch of their voices. For the usage of the Tartars is such that when they are confronting the foe and marshaled for the fray they do not join battle till the drums begin to beat – that is the drums of the commander. While they wait for the beat of the drums, all the Tartar host sound their instruments and join in song. That is why the noise of instruments and of singing was so loud on both sides alike.

When all the troops were in readiness on both sides, then the drums of the Great Khan began to beat. After that there was no more delay; but the two armies fell upon each other with bow and sword and club, and a few with lances. The foot-soldiers had cross-bows also and other weapons in plenty. What more shall I say? This was the start of a bitter and bloody battle. Now you might see arrows flying like pelting rain, for the whole air was full of them. Now you might see horsemen and horses tumbling dead upon the ground. So loud was the shouting and the clash of armies that you could not have heard the thunder of heaven. You must know that Nayan was a baptized Christian and in this battle he had the cross of Christ on his standard...

[*Next few passages talk about the fleeing of Nayan and Khublai's order to execute him*]

Khubilai Khan and Christianity

...It was in the month of November that Kubilai returned to Khanbalik. And there he stayed till February and March, the season of our Easter. Learning that this was one of our principal feasts, he sent for all the Christians and desired them to bring him the book containing the four Gospels. After treating the book to repeated applications of incense with great ceremony, he kissed it devoutly and desired all his barons and lords there present to do the same. This usage he regularly observes on the principal feasts of the Christians, such as Easter and Christmas. And he does likewise on the principal feasts of the Saracens, Jews, and idolaters. Being asked why he did so, he replied: 'There are four prophets who are worshiped and to whom all the world does reverence. The Christians say that their God was Jesus Christ, the Saracens Mahomet, the Jews Moses, and the idolaters Sakyamuni Burkhan, who was the first to be represented as God in the form of an idol. And I do honor and reverence to all four, so that I may be sure of doing it to him who is greatest in heaven and truest; and to him I pray for aid.' But on the Great Khan's own showing he regards as truest and best the faith of the Christians, because he declares that it commands nothing that is not full of all goodness and holiness. He will not on any account allow the Christians to carry the cross before them, and this because on it suffered and died such a great man as Christ.

Someone may well ask why, since he regards the Christian faith as the best, he does not embrace it and become a Christian. The reason may be gathered from what he said to Messer Niccolo and Messer Maffeo when he sent them as emissaries to the Pope. They used from time to time to raise this matter with him; but he would reply: 'On what grounds do you desire me to become a Christian? You see that the Christians who live in these parts are so ignorant that they accomplish nothing and are powerless. And you see that these idolaters do whatever they will; and when I sit at table the cups in the middle of the hall come to me full of wine or other beverages without anyone touching them, and I drink from them. They banish bad weather in any direction they choose and perform many marvels. And, as you know, their idols speak and give them such predictions as they ask. But, if I am converted to the faith of Christ and become a Christian, then my barons and others who do not embrace the faith of Christ will say to me: "What has induced you to undergo baptism and adopt the faith of Christ? What virtues or what miracles have you seen to his credit?" For these idolaters declare that what they do they do by their holiness and by virtue

of their idols. Then I should not know what to answer, which would be a grave error in their eyes. And these idolaters, who by their arts and sciences achieve such great results, could easily compass my death.

[Khubilai still asked the Polos to go to the Pope and bring back preachers. According to Marco Polo if the Pope really had sent men with the ability to preach the Christian faith to the Great Khan, then the Khan would have become a Christian.]

Khan's Personal Appearance

He is a man of good stature, neither short nor tall but of moderate height. His limbs are well fleshed out and modelled in due proportion. His complexion is fair and ruddy like a rose, the eyes black and handsome the nose shapely and set squarely in place.

He has four consorts who are all accounted his lawful wives; and his eldest son by any of these four has a rightful claim to be emperor on the death of the present Khan. They are called empresses, each by her own name. Each of these ladies holds her own court. None of them has less than 300 ladies in waiting, all of great beauty and charm. They have many eunuchs and many other men and women in attendance, so that each one of these ladies has in her court 10,000 persons. When he wishes to lie with one of his four wives, he invites her to his chamber; or sometimes he goes to his wife's chamber.

You should know further that by his four wives the Great Khan has twenty-two male children. The eldest was called Chinghiz, for love of the good Chinghiz Khan. He was to have succeeded his father as Great Khan and lord of the whole empire. But it happened that he died, leaving a son named Temur; this Temur is now destined to be Great Khan and lord, because he is the son of the eldest son of the Great Khan. I can assure you that this Temur is a man of wisdom and prowess, as he has already proved many times on the field of battle.

[Marco Polo further talks about other dozens of the Khan's sons and about their status in the empire]

Khan's Palace

You must know that for three months in the year, December, January, and February, the Great Khan lives in the capital city of Cathay, whose name is Khanbalik. The palace is completely surrounded by a square wall, each side being a mile in length so that the whole circuit is four miles. At each comer of this wall stands a large palace of great beauty and splendor, in which the Great Khan keeps his military stores. In the middle of each side is another palace resembling the comer palaces, so that round the whole circuit of the walls there are eight palaces, all serving as arsenals. Each is reserved for a particular type of munition...

...It [the palace] is the largest that was ever seen. The foundation of the palace lies within this wall, so that as much of the wall as projects beyond it forms a sort of terrace, on which men can walk right round and inspect the outside of the palace. At the outer edge of this wall is a fine gallery with columns, where men can meet and talk. At each face of the palace is a great marble staircase, ascending from ground level to the top of this marble wall, which affords an entry into the palace. The palace itself has a very high roof. Inside, the walls of the halls and chambers are all covered with gold and silver and decorated with pictures of dragons and birds and horsemen and various breeds of beasts and scenes of battle. The ceiling is similarly adorned, so that there is nothing to be seen anywhere but gold and pictures. The hall is so vast and so wide that a meal might well be served there for more than 6,000 men. The number of chambers is quite bewildering. The whole building is at once so immense and so well constructed that no man in the world, granted that he had the power to effect it, could imagine any improvement in design or execution. The roof is all ablaze with scarlet and green and blue and yellow and all the colors that are, so brilliantly varnished that it glitters like crystal and the sparkle of it can be seen from far away. And this roof is so strong and so stoutly built as to last for many a long year.

In the rear part of the palace are extensive apartments, both chambers and halls, in which are kept

the private possessions of the Khan. Here is stored his treasure: gold, and silver, precious stones and pearls, and his gold and silver vessels. And here too are his ladies and his concubines. In these apartments everything is arranged for his comfort and convenience, and outsiders are not admitted.

Between the inner and the outer walls, of which I have told you, are stretches of park-land with stately trees. The grass grows here in abundance, because all the paths are paved and built up fully two cubits above the level of the ground, so that no mud forms on them and no rain-water collects in puddles, but the moisture trickles over the lawns, enriching the soil and promoting a lush growth of herbage. In these parks there is a great variety of game, such as white harts, musk-deer, roebuck, stags, squirrels, and many other beautiful animals. All the area within the walls is full of these graceful creatures, except the paths that people walk on.

[There was also a manmade pond in the palace where animals came to drink water. A stream connected this pond to another one in the palace of Khubilai's son and the two were connected with a bridge. Further, Marco Polo describes another palace that Khubilai built for his son]

The Town of Taidu

On the banks of a great river in the province of Cathay there stood an ancient city of great size and splendor which was named Khan-balik, that is to say in our language 'the Lord's City'. Now the Great Khan discovered through his astrologers that this city would rebel and put up a stubborn resistance against the Empire. For this reason he had this new city built next to the old one, with only the river between. And he removed the inhabitants of the old city and settled them in the new one, which is called Taidu, leaving only those whom he did not suspect of any rebellious designs; for the new city was not big enough to house all those who lived in the old.

...In this city there is such a multitude of houses and of people, both within the walls and without, that no one could count their number. Actually there are more people outside the walls in the suburbs than in the city itself. And in every suburb or ward, at about a mile's distance from the city, there are many fine hostels which provide lodging for merchants coming from different parts: a particular hostel is assigned to every nation, as we might say one for the Lombards, another for the Germans, another for the French. Merchants and others come here on business in great numbers, both because it is the Khan's residence and because it affords a profitable market. And the suburbs have as fine houses and mansions as the city, except of course for the Khan's palace.

You must know that no one who dies is buried in the city. If an idolater dies there, his body is taken to the place of cremation, which lies outside all the suburbs. And so with the others also; when they die they are taken right outside the suburbs for burial. Similarly, no act of violence is performed inside the city, but only outside the suburbs.

The Khan's Guards and Court

As for the Great Khan's guard of 12,000 men, you must know that they are called *Keshikten*, which is as much as to say 'knights and liegemen of the lord'. He employs them not out of fear of any man but in token of his sovereignty. These 12,000 horsemen have four captains, one over every 3,000. Each 3,000 in turn reside in the Khan's palace for three days and three nights and eat and drink there, and at the end of that time another 3,000 take their place, and so they continue throughout the year.

When the Great Khan is holding court, the seating at banquets is arranged as follows. He himself sits at a much higher table than the rest at the northern end of the hall, so that he faces south. His principal wife sits next to him on the left. On the right, at a somewhat lower level, sit his sons in order of age, Chinghiz the eldest being placed rather higher than the rest, and his grandsons and his kinsmen of the imperial lineage. They are so placed that their heads are on a level with the Great Khan's feet. Next to them are seated the other noblemen at other tables lower down again. And the

ladies are seated on the same plan. All the wives of the Khan's sons and grandsons and kinsmen are seated on his left at a lower level, and next to them the wives of his nobles and knights lower down still.And they all know their appointed place in the lord's plan. The tables are so arranged that the Great Khan can see everything, and there ate a great many of them...

[Further, the story describes the various vessels and foods that the Khan had, and their arrangement in the room.]

...At all the entrances of the hall, or wherever else the Great Khan may be, stand two men of gigantic stature, one on either side, with staves in their hands. This is because it is not permissible for anyone to touch the threshold of the door, but all who enter must step over it. If anyone should happen to touch it by accident, the guardians take his clothes from him and he must pay a fine to redeem them. Or if they do not take his clothes, they administer the appointed number of blows. But if they are newcomers who do not know of the rule, certain barons are assigned to introduce them and warn them of the rule. This is done because touching the threshold is looked upon as a bad omen...

[There is a mention of entertainment and musicians in the hallway that play while the Khan is drinking and eating. The description concludes with a remark about the splendid celebrations of the Khan's birthday parties.]

Khan's Hunting Parties

You may take it for a fact that during the three months which the Great Khan spends in the city of Khan-balik, that is, December, January, and February, he has ordered that within a distance of sixty days' journey from where he is staying everybody must devote himself to hunting and hawking. The order goes out to every governor of men or lands to send all such large beasts as wild boars, harts, stags, roebucks, bears, and the like, or at any rate the greater part of them. So every governor gathers round him all the huntsmen of the district, and together they go wherever these beasts are to be found, beating their coverts in turn and killing some of them with their hounds but most with their arrows.

You must know also that the Great Khan has a plentiful supply of leopards skilled in hunting game and of lynxes trained in the chase and past masters of their craft. He has a number of lions of immense size, bigger than those of Egypt; they have very handsome, richly colored fur, with longitudinal stripes of black, orange, and white. They are trained to hunt wild boars and bulls, bears, wild asses, stags, roebuck, and other game. A grand sight it is to see the stately creatures that fall a prey to these lions. When the lions are led out to the chase, they are carried on carts in cages, each with a little dog for company. They are caged because otherwise they would be too ferocious and too eager in their pursuit of game, so that there would be no holding them. They must always be led upwind; for if their prey caught wind of the smell they would not wait, but would be off in a flash. He has also a great many eagles trained to take wolves and foxes and fallow-deer and roe-deer, and these too bring in game in plenty. Those that are trained to take wolves are of immense size and power, for there is never a wolf so big that he escapes capture by one of these eagles...

...When the Khan has spent the three months of December, January, and February in the city of which I have spoken, he sets off in March and travels southward to within two days' journey of the Ocean. He is accompanied by fully 10,000 falconers and takes with him fully 5,000 gerfalcons and peregrine falcons and *sakers* in great abundance, besides a quantity of *goshawks* for hawking along the riversides. You must not imagine that he keeps all this company with him in one place. In fact he distributes them here and there, in groups of a hundred or two hundred or more. Then they engage in fowling, and most of the fowl they take are brought to the Great Khan... [*On his journeys the Khan*] always rides on the back of four elephants, in a very handsome shelter of wood, covered inside with cloth of beaten gold and outside with lion skins. Here he always keeps twelve gerfalcons of the best he possesses and is attended by several barons to entertain him and keep him company...

[Marco Polo goes on describing the camp grounds that are used as temporary settlements during journeys and the hunting season]

Khan's Paper Money and Trade

You must know that he has money made for him by the following process, out of the bark of trees – to be precise, from mulberry trees (the same whose leaves furnish food for silkworms). The fine bast between the bark and the wood of the tree is stripped off. Then it is crumbled and pounded and flattened out with the aid of glue into sheets like sheets of cotton paper, which are all black. When made, they are cut up into rectangles of various sizes, longer than they are broad. The smallest is worth half a small tornesel; the next an entire such tornesel; the next half a silver groat; the next an entire silver groat, equal in value to a silver groat of Venice; and there are others equivalent to two, five, and ten groats and one, three, and as many as ten gold bezants. And all these papers are sealed with the seal of the Great Khan.

Several times a year parties of traders arrive with pearls and precious stones and gold and silver and other valuables, such as cloth of gold and silk, and surrender them all to the Great Khan. The Khan then summons twelve experts, who are chosen for the task and have special knowledge of it, and bids them examine the wares that the traders have brought and pay for them what they judge to be their true value. The twelve experts duly examine the wares and pay the value in the paper currency of which I have spoken. The traders accept it willingly, because they can spend it afterwards on the various goods they buy throughout the Great Khan's dominions. And I give you my word that the wares brought in at different times during the year mount up to a value of fully 400,000 bezants, and they are all paid for in this paper currency.

Let me tell you further that several times a year a fiat (command) goes forth through the towns that all those who have gems and pearls and gold and silver must bring them to the Great Khan's mint. This they do, and in such abundance that it is past all reckoning; and they are all paid in paper money. By this means the Great Khan acquires all the gold and silver and pearls and precious stones of all his territories...

Beliefs of the Khan's People

There are also in the city of Khan-balik, including Christians, Saracens, and Cathayans, about 5,000 astrologers and soothsayers, for whom the Great Khan makes yearly provision of food and clothing as he does for the poor. For they search out and discover what sort of conditions each moon of the year will produce in accordance with the natural course and disposition of the planets and constellations and their special influences: in such-and-such a month there will be thunderstorms, in another earthquakes, in another lightning and heavy rain, in yet other deadly outbreaks of pestilence and wars and civil dissensions... So they will make many little booklets in which they will set down everything that is due to happen in the course of the year, moon by moon...

As I have already said, the people of Cathay are all idolaters. Every man has in his house an image hanging on his chamber wall which represents the High God of Heaven, or at least a tablet on which the name of God is written. And every day they worship it with uplifted hands, gnashing their teeth three times and praying that the god will give them a long and happy life, good health, and a sound understanding. From him they ask nothing else. But down below on the ground they have another image representing Natigai, the god of earthly things, who guides the course of one that is born on earth. They make him with a wife and children and worship him in the same way, with incense and gnashing of teeth and uplifted hands; and to him they pray for good weather and harvests and children and the like.

[*Marco Polo admires the excellence of the people's manners, their politeness, courtesy and respectful family relations*]... But they have no regard for the welfare of their souls, caring only for the nurture of their bodies and for their own happiness. Concerning the soul, they believe indeed that it is immortal, but in this fashion. They hold that as soon as a man is dead he enters into another body; and according as he has conducted himself well or ill in life, he passes from good to better or from bad to worse. That is to say, if he is a man of humble rank and has behaved well and virtuously in life, he will be reborn after death from a gentlewoman and will be a gentleman, and thereafter from the womb of a noblewoman and will become a nobleman; and so he follows an ever upward path culminating in assumption into the Deity. But, if he is a

man of good birth and has behaved badly, he will be reborn as the son of a peasant; from a peasant's life he will pass to a dog's and so continually downwards.

Khan's Civil Rules

Perpetrators of various crimes who are caught and put in prison, if they have not been set free at the time appointed by the Great Khan for the release of prisoners, which recurs every three years, are then let out; but they are branded on the jaw, so that they may be recognized.

The present Khan prohibited all the gambling and cheating that used to be more prevalent among them than anywhere else in the world. To cure them of the habit he would say: 'I have acquired you by force of arms and all that you possess is mine. So, if you gamble, you are gambling with my property!' He did not, however, make this a pretext to take anything from them.

[*The story goes on describing the manner in which the common people treated the Khan when they came into his presence. They had to be quiet, peaceful and respectful. They did not spit in his presence and wore special white leather slippers.*]

10. DID MARCO POLO GO TO CHINA?

(Francis Wood, *Did Marco Polo go to China?* Boulder: Westview Press, 1995, pp. 64-75. Copyright © 1991 by Westview Press, A Member of the Perseus Books Group.)

The German Mongolist Herbert Franke queried Marco Polo's veracity partly on the grounds of the contents of his book, most notably things that he omitted from his description of China. Marco Polo's descriptive gifts provided much significant information on the inventions and exotica of the East.

However, while comparing other accounts of the Mongols and Chinese written by contemporary or near contemporary European visitors, there are some very significant omissions in Polo's text. The very next line in Rubruck's account of paper money (which he only saw in Mongolia as he did not get to China) continues with a description of Chinese writing, which remains one of the most exotically different things about the country, but which does not seem to have struck Marco Polo.

Perhaps even more surprisingly, despite a considerable interest in the edible produce displayed in Hangzhou's markets and the drinks and wines served at imperial banquets, Marco Polo never mentioned tea.

In Marco Polo's book there are relatively few references to women and nowhere is the practice of foot binding even mentioned.

He may have lacked interest in Chinese culture or been so narrowly European in outlook that the writing system, for example, was of no interest to him, though it is claimed in his Prologue that he mastered Mongol at least and spoke directly to Qubilai Khan. In these arguments, the failure to describe foot-binding seems the most extraordinary for it, almost above all else, certainly fascinated later travelers.

11. END OF THE MONGOLS

(Morris Rossabi, *Mongolia in the 1990s: from Commissars to Capitalists?* in www.soros.org/mongolia/rossabi.html. Reprinted with permission from the author.)

A country three times as large as France with a population of a few hundred thousand in early days, Mongolia encountered great difficulties in fostering a country-wide identity and in accepting unified rule. The enormous size of Mongolia contributed to localism and local identity, as individual herders naturally identified with their own groups and not with a larger Mongol entity. Unity under these economic and political circumstances offered few benefits. Organization centered around specific tribes, with leadership provided by a chieftain and occasionally a shaman. Defense against bellicose neighbors, the Turkic rulers of Central Asia or the more expansionist Chinese dynasties, would prompt the inhabitants of Mongolia to join together to safeguard their pasture lands or their commercial interests. A belligerent Mongol tribe facing threats posed by ambitious rival chiefs would also cause other

tribes to form a confederation for self-protection. Finally, a charismatic leader could persuade tribes to band together for forays designed to obtain booty. These alliances were temporary; once they achieved their immediate objectives, they disbanded. Unity proved elusive because no overarching ethnic or national loyalty to one leader and his descendants existed. Loyalty to one specific individual did not translate into support for any dynasty or hereditary principle he might seek to establish.

Thus, the rise of Chinggis Khan and the creation of a great Mongol confederation were aberrations. An ecological crisis, commercial conflicts with neighbors, and a reported belief or injunction from the Sky God to Chinggis to dominate the world probably prompted the Mongols' explosion from Mongolia early in the thirteenth century. A powerful cavalry, innovative military tactics, and the vaunted mobility they had cultivated as herders helped them to carve out the largest contiguous land empire in world history, stretching from Korea and Vietnam in the East to Russia and modern Syria in the West. Their confederation endured for at most two generations. Strong supratribal and ethnic identity and the allegiance to a dynasty or to an Imperial state, not one specific leader, simply did not develop. Transfer of power was not smooth, partly because the Mongols had not decided upon a regular, orderly system of succession. Moreover, many Mongols saw scant benefit in allegiance to a large empire or to a Khan. They had more parochial loyalties to a specific region or to a tribal leader. Thus, within two decades after Chinggis Khan's death, the Mongol empire had degenerated into was of Khan against Khan, brother against brother, and cousin against cousin.

In turn, the elite who saw benefits in unity became increasingly estranged from ordinary Mongols. Seeking to rule rather than to plunder the vast domains they had subjugated, the elite recognized that adoption of and adaptation to some of the political institutions, rituals, and religions of the people the Mongols had vanquished were advantageous. They thus began to be Sinicized or "Persianized," settling in towns, oases, and cities and gradually abandoning their traditional nomadic pastoralism. Identifying with the sedentary local populations, they increasingly lost touch with their herder brothers and cousins, which led to divisions and battles among and the ultimate weakening of the Mongols. The elite also recognized that the Mongols lacked the technical and administrative skills to rule the vast domains they had conquered and needed foreign advisers and mangers. The recruitment of Chinese, Tibetans, Central Asian Turks, and Persians alienated traditional-minded Mongols, widening the gulf between the two groups.

Such internal divisions, rather than decisive defeats in battle, led to the collapse of the Mongol empire. Though the Pax Mongolica in Eurasia contributed to the first direct commercial, cultural, and scientific interchanges between Europe, West Asia, and East Asia, the indigenous peoples, capitalizing on the disunity among the Mongol rulers, began to rebel. By 1368, the Mongols had been compelled to withdraw from china, Central Asia, and West Asia, and by the fifteenth century their rule over Russia effectively ended.

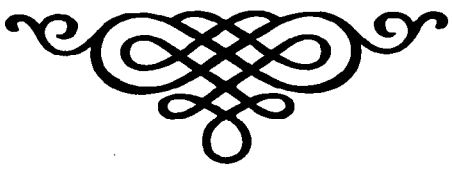
Retreating to Mongolia, the Mongols confronted the same dilemmas. Unity continued to prove elusive, and the Mongols fragmented into different, often combative groups with no all-embracing Mongol identity. Late in the sixteenth century, one Khan sought to use religion as a unifying force. He invited what eventually turned out to be the Third Dalai Lama to Mongolia to instruct and perhaps to convert the Mongol elite to Tibetan Buddhism. The nobles as well as commoners converted virtually en masse, but religious homogeneity did not translate into political unity. Mongols remained in disparate and relatively weak regional groups.

The expansionism of both the Tsarist empires of Russia and the Qing dynasty of China threatened and eventually engulfed the vulnerable and disunited Mongol peoples. By 1634, China gained control over the Chahars of Inner Mongolia, and by 1691 it dominated the Khalkha or Eastern Mongols, currently the largest of the groups in Mongolia. The Khalkha Mongols were divided into at least four often-conflicting Khanates, preventing a unified challenge to Qing armies. Even the

Bogdo Gege, the leader of the Mongol Buddhists, could not coerce or cajole the Khans into an alliance. More divisions plagued the Zunghar or Western Mongols, as the Torghuud, Khoyid, and Khoshuud, among others, squabbled and fought over pasturelands, rights to water, and the political ambitions of rival leaders. In 1757, Qing forces overwhelmed most of the Western Mongols while Russia incorporated the rest into its eastern domains.

China dominated Mongolia until 1911. Seeking to rule, the Qing court initiated policies designed to transform Mongol society. It started by limiting the migrations of the herders, believing that restrictions on movement would facilitate control. It also encouraged the growth of towns as an additional means of regulating the mobility of the population. With towns and the attendant merchant class the bureaucracy undermined the power of the nomadic herdsmen. The court then tried to exacerbate the divisions among the Khalkhas by appointing new and more Khans, each with equivalent powers and with small groups to lead. Such fragmentation contributed to the disunity that had plagued the Mongols for centuries. The court also supported the Buddhist hierarchy, attempting to use Buddhism as a mechanism of control. Assuming that Buddhism's nonviolent message would foster a more docile Mongol population, it generally approved of the growing power of the Buddhist monasteries and of the Bogdo Gegen, the leader of the Buddhist community. With such support, the monasteries by 1900 dominated about one-fifth of the total wealth of the country. Some of the larger monasteries developed into small towns or cities and thus needed supplies. Chinese merchants increasingly became the main providers of such products to the monasteries and herders and simultaneously exploited Mongol herdsmen who needed goods throughout the year but whose primary assets of animal products could be marketed only in summer. Supplying the Mongols with credit at extremely high rates of interest, they rapidly forced the herdsmen into lifelong debt. The Chinese merchants contributed to poverty in the country and earned the hostility of most Mongols. Animosity toward the Chinese often erupted into attacks and riots in the late nineteenth century.

The Mongols achieved independence from Chinese control with the Chinese Revolution of 1911, but such autonomy proved to be temporary. Though Mongol leaders sought to capitalize on the disarray in China to liberate themselves, the legacy of disunity continued to hobble them. Power-hungry nobles, avaricious monks, and corrupt officials fought among themselves, preventing the development of unified leadership. The resulting instability permitted Chinese military commanders, White Russian soldiers, and Russian Communists to meddle in the country's affairs from 1911 to 1921. Finally, in 1921, a small group of Mongols, with the assistance of Lenin and the Russian Red Army, overwhelmed both Mongol and foreign contestants for power and founded the Mongolian People's Republic in 1924. The new leadership moved against the nobility and the Buddhist hierarchy while seeking to gain control over the herdsmen by restricting their mobility.



FOUR
What Role Does Inner Asia Play in the Modern Global Society?

Any analysis of Inner Asia in contemporary times creates confusion for the student. There is still the issue of boundaries, political, and geographic. Americans know virtually nothing about much of this region since it was under the domination of the Soviet Union, although it was often the center of ploys in the 19th century "Great Game." During the heyday of imperialism, many of the "nations" in the region were sought after by England and France, in addition to Russia. These nations created war after war in this region, pitting tribe against tribe and neighbor against neighbor. The legacy of these actions can be felt even today with attitudes of Central Asian toward the West. The history of these wars, while they may make for "exotic" national history which can raise chauvinistic feelings, only indicate the chaos this policy caused in Central Asia.

An examination of the issues throughout the region in the contemporary period points to several distinct categories. New identities are being formed as new "nation-states" are emerging and testing their ability to rule their peoples. Many of these new states are rife with language and ethnic issues since, once again, boundary lines were developed in an arbitrary manner. In some cases, there are the stirrings of separatist movements arising from religious and nationalistic roots. Political alignments have shifted, certainly more drastically since the demise of the Cold War. Religion is a strong force, mobilizing people and, at the same time, isolated women from the main stream of development, as in the case of Afghanistan. Religion is also the force behind some separatist movements and many claim that Islamic "terrorism" emanates from some of the distinct mountains of Central Asia. The environment of all of Central Asia is being threatened from many quarters. Land is allowed to erode, water resources are squandered, market value resources are exploited for quick gain. The result of these environmental issues is the serious threat to the traditional life style of many of the peoples of Central Asia. As the Silk Road becomes the Gas Road, nomadism and traditional appreciation of the land and its resources is brought into question. The future of Central/Inner Asia requires serious study and commitment.

POLITICS AND NATIONHOOD

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1. CENTRAL ASIA DIVIDED: THE GREAT GAME

(Karl E. Meyer & Shareen Blair Brysac, *Tournament of Shadows: The Great Game and the Race for Empire in Central Asia*, Counterpoint: Washington DC, 1999, pp. 19-20, 61-63, 104, 108-109, 111, 113, 182-183, 196, 202-203, 206-207, 230-231. Permission pending)

If one were to attempt a grand narrative of the nineteenth century, a likely title in today's vernacular would be "Go For It." The age saw an unparalleled movement of peoples and pioneers who pried open the gates of Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Missionaries followed their lead, searching for land, work, and riches, for political and religious freedom, or simply for adventure. A mixture of impulses – pride, the claims of national interest, the lure of profits, missionary zeal, the wish to relocate prisoners or ambitious soldiers – propelled this planting of flags across the globe. Whatever their motives, those in charge believed that expansion was a good thing, that it served some providential purpose, and that ordinary settlers as well as colonial governors were bearers of a superior civilization, to the benefit of the less fortunate natives. Such was the case with the expansion of the Russian Empire into Central Asia. The Russian advance into Afghanistan and India threatened the British, which lead to their confrontation. The struggle lasted a century, took many lives, drew and changed borders and dictated cultures to the numerous peoples of Central Asia, who are "enjoying" these borders through the present day.

A Tale of Two Dogs

When a British "pilgrim" known as the "horse doctor," William Moorcroft, was sent by the East India Company to search for legendary Central Asian horses, he encountered the following incident at the Tibetan frontier outpost at Daba. It was July 1812. In his report to Calcutta, Moorcroft recounted his surprise as the

dogs, after rushing towards him, fondling, frisking, and barking, performed a trick that gave the Englishman pause: "They appeared desirous of showing their accomplishments by sitting up on their haunches and pushing forwards their forelegs...as is sometimes taught to those animals in imitation of presenting firearms." Clearly they had been taught this military drill by foreigners. "They were said to have been brought by *Ooroos*," Moorcroft wrote. *Ooroos* meant Russians and this incident meant to the Englishman that as early as the 1810's Russians had already reached the Tibetan plateau. This singular incident of the dogs in Tibet foreshadowed a century of British obsession with Russia's eastward advance and a century of struggle between the two Empires for the Central Asian frontiers, a struggle known as the Great Game.

Wars in Afghanistan - British Protective Frontier

"Frontiers are the razor's edge on which hang suspended the issue of war or peace and the life of nations," declared Lord Curzon, his era's foremost authority on Asian frontiers.

During the 1830's British diplomats and strategists began to perceive a new global adversary, the Russian Empire, whose armies and agents seemed almost as threatening as those of the Tsar's former ally, Napoleon. After conquering the Caucasus, Russian armies were pushing eastward and Russian operatives were probing the desert grasslands from Oxania to Chinese Tartary. Russia's eventual goal was believed to be India, which could be invaded through Afghanistan or Persia, which in their turn, were the defensive bulwarks of the British India. In 1838 a British Governor-General issued a call to arms, believing that an unprovoked invasion of Afghanistan would somehow impart luster to the reign of Britannia's new Queen and foil the knavish designs of the Russian Tsar. Lord Palmerston as Foreign Secretary articulated the grand strategy that sent the army to Kabul: "It seems pretty clear that sooner or later the Cossack and the Sepoy, the man from the Baltic and from the British islands, will meet at the center of Asia. It should be our business to take care that the meeting should be as far off from our Indian possessions as may be convenient and advantageous to us. But the meeting will not be avoided by our staying at home to receive the visit."

The 1st Afghan War which took many lives of both the British soldiers and the Afghan fighters ended in a major failure of the British to occupy the frontier towns of Afghanistan or attract the pro-Russian Emirs onto their side. "No failure so totally overwhelming as this is recorded in the pages of history," wrote sir William Kaye, in his *History of the War in Afghanistan.* "No lesson so grand and impressive is to be found in all the annals of the world." After an unbroken sequence of victories, the British in India were humbled by allegedly backward Asians, a fact worrying to the rulers as it was exhilarating to the ruled. Who ultimately was responsible for the Afghan debacle? It seems fair to say that what tipped the scales was British prestige and domestic politics. The Russian menace was inflated, the fighting abilities of the Asian peoples were undervalued, and Britain simply assumed that it had a unilateral right of intervention.

Yet by 1874 the shame of failure was forgotten and the British had a new objective. It was the "ultimate expression of the forward policy, to be carried out with little or no regard for Afghan wishes, but with an unswerving determination to place the Indian defensive frontier where it had been in the days of the great Empires, in Ashoka's day and in Akbar's day – on the northern ridges of the Hindu Kush and the Oxus Valley beyond." It was "the high water mark of the British forward policy, the process of imperial expansion carried to its logical conclusion." To build and empire like Ashoka and Akbar! What a tantalizing vision of a poet-prince who only recently presided at Delhi from the golden Mughal throne.

Though scarcely comparable in magnitude or duration with the Vietnam War, the Afghan conflict had a divisive effect that will seem familiar to Americans who lived through the Johnson and Nixon years. Many Britons failed to see what overriding interest justified the loss of British lives and the bloody reprisals that followed.

The Russians are Coming

Imagine a terrain flat as a saucer, devoid of peaks and with scarcely any trees, consisting of grasslands, deserts, and brackish marshes – an unappealing terrain, except perhaps to missions of gerbils secure in their underground burrows. This is the Kazakh Steppe, covering some 750,000 square miles, three times the area of Taxas, the area which one must traverse to reach what Tsarist cartographers called western Turkestan.

Yet the challenge of a long journey did not stop Russia from advancing their expansionist policies. Russia expanded eastward and southward in successive waves, waves so powerful that in the course of four centuries the Tsarist empire grew at the remarkable average of fifty-five square miles a day. After conquering Siberia, in 1734, with an important victory over Kazakh warriors, the Russians began their advance into Central Asia.

In the 1700's western Turkestan had ceased to be a flourishing crossroads for caravans plying the silk routes between Asia and the Mediterranean. Its famous oasis cities – Bukhara, Khiva, and Samarkand – had declined into provincial backwaters. Yet in 1717, Peter the Great sent an army of 3,500 men across the steppe to subdue Khiva and search for gold sands said to exist nearby. By 1800, forty-six forts and ninety-six redoubts formed a protective web of Russian settlers seeking pasturage, though Khiva was still unconquered. The final conquest of the Turkic Khanates occurred under a successive military Governor, Konstantin Petrovich Kaufmann. At a meeting of a special council called by the Tsar, Alexander II turned to him and said, "Konstantin Petrovich, take Khiva for me!"

Fyodor Przhevalsky, a famous Russian explorer of the late 19th century in his accounts presented the Russian rationale for expansion. His first expedition of 1870-73 convinced Przhevalsky that Asians were ripe for forcible absorption, at little risk or cost. Displaying a mingling of fascination and condescension, an ambivalence about the Far East summarized in the Russian word *Aziatchina,* he believe Russia's future lay in Asia. Przhevalsky states in an 1877 report, "Our military conquests in Asia bring glory not only to Russia; they are also victories for the good of mankind. Carbine bullets and rifled cannon bear those elements of civilization which would otherwise be very long in coming to the petrified realms of the Inner Asian Khans." As for the British, he warned that if given a chance, they "will destroy our influence in all lands and countries inhabited by the Chinese and the Mongols."

Connection: Dr. Watson and Rudyard Kipling in Inner Asia

After glancing casually at John H. Watson in their first encounter, Sherlock Holmes remarked, "You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive." Dr. Watson had indeed served as an Assistant Surgeon on the North-West Frontier and was sounded at Maiwand in the Second Afghan War. For Holmes, it was an obvious inference: Here was a tanned physician of military bearing who had undergone hardship: where else in 1881 but Afghanistan?

As Watson was returning on the troopship *Orontes* to London, "that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained," the young Rudyard Kipling was sailing the other way. Kipling was both in Lahore in 1862, and after attending boarding school in England, returned to India to work on the staff of *The Civil and Military Gazette.* No sooner was he back in Lahore, whose bazaars and back alleys he knew as a Hindustani-speaking child, than he was entranced by native life. "I'm in love with the Country," he wrote a friend. "...I find heat and smells and oils and spices, and puffs of temple incense, and sweat and darkness, and dirt and lust and cruelty, and above all, things wonderfully fascinating innumerable." Out of this love came Kipling's masterpiece, *Kim,* a book about knowledge and power that is something more than imperial propaganda. Published in 1901, *Kim* was the book that gave universal currency to the phrase Great Game and that endowed Raj's intelligence service and its mapmakers with an enduring aura of glamour.

2. BACK ON THE MAP

(From Back on the Map: The Geopolitics of Central Asia, by Paul A. Goble, *Central Asia*, No. 2(8) 1997. Reprinted by Permission of the Editor.)

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, many, both inside of Central Asia and out, assumed that the most important factor that would define the future of the countries and peoples of the region was Islam. Consequently, many especially in the West suggested that these countries would inevitably gravitate toward the Middle East and South Asia and that there would be a significant competition for influence in Central Asia between the secular Islam of Turkey and the more radical variant of Iran. The following article, written in 1997, argues that contrary to the expectations of many, geography rather than culture would be defining the fate of Central Asia.

That "new great game", this time between Turkey and Iran, never really happened. Despite Turkey's advantages in terms of language, resources, and secularism, Ankara was effectively eliminated from this supposed competition because it was geographically distant and because nothing coming from Central Asia could go to Turkey except by crossing a third country. At the same time, Iran enjoyed the great advantage of geography: Were it not for the poverty of the Iranian government, its isolation from the West, and the antagonism of Shiia and Sunni Muslims, Iran would have been the bridge to the West.

But if this game never happened, it nonetheless highlights an important point: geography matters profoundly in international affairs – where a country stands depends to a large extent on where it sits – but geography is not something that exists entirely outside of the minds of the people who are on any given map. In sum, physical geography is terribly important in the relations among states, but how states view it, that is, how they conceive their political and cultural location, may matter as much or even more.

Following the recovery of their independence, the five countries of Central Asia have had to make decisions about three different maps: the old map that linked them into the Soviet Union and still ties them to Russia, the map of their own region that defines both its limits and their interrelationships, and the new and larger map that defines their relations with various states and regions beyond their own.

Tearing Up the Old Map

For most of this century, the five countries of Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan – were subordinate to Moscow and subsumed in a map defined by Russia. That map was largely accepted both by the Central Asians themselves and by most outsiders. But in 1991, that map was tossed into the scrapheap of history, a development that placed enormous challenges on both these countries and other states as well.

Many in Central Asia assumed that their political independence meant that they would have the freedom to choose their orientation and place on the map of the world. Some looked to the Islamic states for inspiration; others looked to the "little dragons" of the Pacific rim; and still others looked to the secular West.

But very quickly, the Central Asians learned that changing maps by itself did not mean changing geography. On the one hand, the Russian presence could not be ignored. Russia was and remains the most powerful influence in the region. Some of that is inertia, but much of it reflects the conscious decision of the Russian government to maintain control over what it calls "the near abroad."

And on the other hand, the Central Asians had to confront a fact that many of them still do not want to acknowledge: they are a landlocked region, surrounded by countries either locked in their own problems or interested in projecting their influence on the Central Asian states. And the Central Asians had to face the fact that while their region is immensely rich potentially, it is also fundamentally poor in fact – not because of the qualities of its populations, as some have thought, but rather because of the difficulties of exporting its resources to create wealth.

And that geographic fact, one that the Central Asians may modify over time by diversifying production and ties with other states, has forced Central Asia to defer to Moscow more than most people there or elsewhere would like. The debates on pipelines from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to the West have highlighted this difficulty even if they have not led everyone to reach the necessary conclusions.

Further, this geographic fact, once recognized, will allow Central Asians to understand why some outside powers are acting the way they are with respect to the neighbors of Central Asia. Russian policy toward Iran, Chinese policy in Xinjiang, and American policy in Pakistan all have their roots in a concern about Central Asia, a concern that suggests how central the region is to the thinking of outside powers even as it highlights how remote the region remains on the map.

A Regional Map for Themselves

Having achieved independence, the Central Asian states have also had to draw a new map for themselves. Are they five different countries with few common interests, or are they a single people cruelly divided by Stalin that must reunite? Are the divisions among them natural or are they the product of Russian imperialism in the past or even now? And equally important, what are the external borders of the place called "Central Asia?"

As every student of Central Asia knows, the divisions now in Central Asia reflect the imposition on the region of a European model of identity and development, a model that fails to capture the nature of identity in this part of the world. But to say that is not to say that there are not real differences among these peoples and these states.

Some, like the borders of Kazakhstan were imposed from the outside in order to make Central Asian unity impossible. Almaty cannot act exclusively like a Central Asian country or it risks losing control of its ethnic Russian north, but unless it does, Central Asians will not unite because they are unwilling to submit to Uzbekistan's dominance.

But others, like the location of water supplies or the history of Islamization and sedentarization, are independent of these imperial designs to divide and conquer and thus reflect real and important differences among these countries.

Drawing a map of the region then presupposes that the countries acknowledge their commonalities and their differences, drawing on commonalities where they can and recognizing their differences where they must. And a willingness on the part of all concerned to recognize that the map is more complicated than anyone inside or outside had assumed.

One point worth noting about this is that much of the discussion about Islam and Turkic unity is not about Islam or Turkishness per se; rather, it is an effort to find a vocabulary to discuss this new map, to define who belongs where and how to have cooperation. That may change if the repressive governments in the region, backed by outside powers interested in stability, end up giving birth to anti-Western "fundamentalist" challenges. But it is not yet the case, and assuming a better understanding of the map and of the way in which "fundamentalism" is produced, it won't.

But these difficulties within Central Asia, as it is commonly understood, pale into insignificance relative to defining the limits of Central Asia, the outer line on this new regional map. In Soviet times, the region was always called "Central Asia and Kazakhstan," a reflection of the enormous differences between the former and the latter. Since the collapse of Soviet power, some have wanted to include Afghanistan, northern Iran, Azerbaijan, Xinjiang and parts of Siberia under the rubric.

Such changes in mental maps are not trivial. If one thinks of Central Asia in one way, certain policies become inevitable. And they become impossible, if one thinks of it in a different way.

Finding a Place on the Map of the World

Because most people saw Central Asia as an appendage of either the Soviet world or the Islamic world, few understood that it would inevitably have other ties as well. Some of these are defined by economics. Given that Central Asia is labor-rich but capital-poor, it was inevitable that these countries should have linked up with the capital-rich but labor poor states of the pacific rim.

Others are defined by politics. Some are interested in containing Russian power while other people are interested in promoting it. And still others are defined by culture, with some being interested in including Central Asia into the Muslim and even Arab world and other people being interested in preventing that from happening.

And because of these multiple and competing interests, Central Asians have a greater chance to define themselves and their map than ever before.

They can balance these various forces and thus achieve much, as soon as they recognize that they are very much back on the map and it is one of their own choosing.

3. CENTRAL ASIA CLAIMS ITS HERITAGE

(Central Asia Claims its Heritage: UNESCO Sources # 83, October 1996, Article written by S. Frederick Starr, Chairman of the Central Asian Institute at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, D.C. No copyright permission required.*)*

The vast and fabled region of "Central Asia" is regaining its place in world affairs. This arises largely from the international recognition that the region possesses some of the world's largest deposits of oil and natural gas. Industrialists see a potential boom market in the 52 million inhabitants of the region, and are rushing to set up production and sales facilities there.

Now, years after the fall of the Soviet Union, Central Asia is again becoming the intercontinental "bridge" it had been for three millennia before 1917. Roads and rail links are opening with Iran and China and, through China, with Pakistan and India. Direct flights connect Central Asia with Europe, the Middle East, and North America. Rapidly developing telecommunications make possible instant contact with the rest of the world.

Central Asia is also regaining its identity. Its five new countries have established themselves as independent states with their national languages. Ancient place names and even some family names previously "Russified" are being reclaimed. Local, ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities remain strong and national borders poorly reflect these realities. There are many Uzbeks in Tajikistan and large numbers of Tajiks in Uzbekistan. This is repeated throughout Central Asia, creating the constant potential of conflict. Added to this are the millions of Russians and other Slavs, especially in Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Yet for many Central Asians, it is also a time of uncertainty and anxiety. Every new initiative, no matter how rich its potential benefits, poses huge challenges. The degree of freedom existing within Central Asian countries varies greatly. There is corruption and some attempts have been made to stamp it out. There is fear that transformation will be painful and destabilizing. Soaring birthrates, high infant mortality, alcoholism, and declining life expectancy among males add up to region-wide social crises. Exacerbating these problems are the effects of over-irrigation of the vast cotton-growing flatlands of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and the reckless use of chemical fertilizers there. Poisoned or salinated ground-water, air-born pollution from fertilizers, and the drying up of the Aral Sea are all the direct consequences of ruinous abuse of the ecosystem. Diseases wiped out elsewhere are reappearing in Central Asia at a time when the medical system is virtually collapsing.

No one can predict the future. But it is worth asking what assets the Central Asian countries bring to this challenge. This begins with the people themselves, with the high levels of literacy and competence in many fields they achieved under Soviet rule. Uzbeks, Kazaks and other Central Asians advanced steadily in education and skills. More than a dozen new institutions of higher

education throughout the region, many of them private, are pioneering new fields of study and opening contact with universities abroad.

Despite their varying stages of development as fledgling democracies, most Central Asian countries have seen a revolution in their mass media. In the heady pre-independence days of *perestroika*, privately owned newspapers, radio stations and television channels had already begun to make an appearance throughout the region. The challenges the new media brought to their State-funded counterparts soon saw a dramatic decline in the fortunes of government-controlled broadcasting systems and ideologically biased newspapers.

4. UNITED BY THE SILK ROAD AND DIVIDED BY THE GREAT GAME: NEW IDENTITIES

(A Caspian Gamble, in *The Economist*, February 7th 1998. © 1998 The Economist Newspaper Group, Inc. Www.economist.com, Reprinted with permission. Further reproduction prohibited.)

Between the Black Sea and the Chinese border, more than 70 million people live in eight countries that did not exist in that form a decade ago. Yet culturally, linguistically and historically many of the borders between them are artificial. Iran is home to more Azeris than Azerbaijan; one million Kazakhs live in China; Uzbeks form an important ethnic group in Afghanistan. Tajiks and Kazakhs speak Turkic languages. A Turk From Ankara can easily be understood in Ashgabat, the capital of Turkemistan.

Nor are the religious divisions neat. Azerbajian is part of the Caucasus, yet its people are Muslim, like those in Cental Asia. Georgia and Armenia are Christian. Nagorno-Karabakh, the much-disputed mountain enclave in western Azerbajian, is full of Christian Armenians. The ethnic divisions are equally confusing. The Soviet planners who redrew the map in the 1920's divided Central Asia broadly along linguistic lines, hoping to construct nations from the various nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes of desert and steppe by exaggerating the differences between their dialects. These divisions, imperfect to start with, were subsequently blurred further by heavy Russian immigration and Stalin's eastward push in the 1930's to ethnic groups such as the Volga German and Tatars. More than a third of the inhabitants of Kazakhstan are Russian, and so are around 18% of the people of Kirgizstan, despite a large exodus in recent years. One in five citizens of Tajikistan is an Uzbek.

Except for Georgia and Armenia, these countries do not have a strong sense of nationhood. The Kazakh nomads fell under Russian domination early in the 19th century; the Khanates of Khiva and Kokand and the emirate of Bukhara (loosely speaking, modern-day Uzbekistan) became "protectorates" of the Russian empire in the 1860's and 1870's; Turkmen lands fell a few years later. By the end of the 19th century, Central Asia's emirates and khanates were all puppet fiefs under the Russian tsar. From this historical and cultural legacy, those countries will have to build modern nation-states to achieve the stability they need to make proper use of their oil and gas bonanza.

5. LIKELY LADS: CENTRAL ASIAN LEADERS

(A Caspian Gamble, in *The Economist*, February 7th 1998. © 1998 The Economist Newspaper Group, Inc. Www.economist.com, Reprinted with permission. Further reproduction prohibited.)

Imagine the leaders of Central Asia and the Caucasus gathering for dinner. Eight middle-aged to elderly men sit around the table, talking in Russian, the language they all have in common. They could be reminiscing about old times: almost all of them are former communists, and many had illustrious careers under the Soviet regime. But they are bickering about the seating plan.

By age, the evening's senior statesman is Heidar Aliev, the 74-year-old president of Azerbaijan and a formidably enduring politician. Once head of Azerbaijan's KGB, he was appointed to the Soviet *politburo* in the early 1980's to supervise a crackdown on corruption. Despite his age, Mr. Aliev is the most vigorous orator at the table.

Seated as far away from Mr. Aliev as possible (the two are engaged in a row over oil rights in the Caspian) is Saparmurat Niyazov, president and prime minister of Turkmenistan. Mr. Niyazov cats carefully –

he has recently undergone heart surger – but talks grandly about his country's gas reserves and its foreign policy of "positive neutrality". He has brought some photographs of his latest construction project: a huge "Neutrality Arch" being built next to his palace in Ashgabat. Four huge, angled columns will support a rotating restaurant topped by a rotating statue of Mr. Niyazov.

Tired of Mr Niyazov's self-glorification, most of the guests have now turned to listen to the conversation between Nursultan Nazarbaev, president of Kazakhstan, and Islam Karimov, president of Uzbekistan, each of whom considers himself the most important leader in Central Asia. Mr. Karimov, an engaging and impressive speaker, explains why Uzbekistan's path to development is far superior to that of its neighbors. In his country, he points out, electric power is plentiful and pensions are paid on time. He offers Mr. Nazarbarv one of his many economic tracts. But Mr. Nazarbaev, a youthful 57-year-old who is found of playing tennis and climbing mountains, has recently published his own vision of his counter's future. In contrast to Mr. Karimovs muddled tomes, Mr. NazarbaeVs "Kazakhstan 2036" is for the most part a sensible blueprint for creating a diversified market economy, albeit interspersed with occasional hyperbole. Kazakhstan, he says, could be the "snow leopard" of Central Asia, presumably a cousin of the Asian tiger. But does he know that snow leopards are on the endangered-species list?

Close by is Askar Akaev, a former physicist, who is the leader of Kirgizstan. With his enormous eyebrows raised animatedly, Mr. Akaev is discussing the "Central Asian Union" – a nascent attempt at regional co-operation between Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and his own country. All three Central Asian presidents, and particularly Mr. Karimov, are probing Imamali Rakhmonov, president of Tajikistan, about the prospects for his country's fragile peace.

At the other end of the table sit the two other Caucasus leaders. Edward Shevardnadze, now Georgia's president and formerly the Soviet Union's Foreign minister, is easily the most urbane man at the dinner. He is touting plans to create a trans-Caucasian transport corridor. Meanwhile Levon Ter-Petrosian, president of Armenia, is trying to explain to his colleagues why Armenia is cosying up to Russia, and whether he is really interested in peace with the Azeris.

Power and Glory

Broadly, the Caucasus has strong presidents, whereas Central Asia has dictators. At one extreme lies Turkmenistan, where Mr Niyazov, who has adopted the title – "Turkmenbashi" (Leader of the Turkmens) combines an extreme personality cult with a police state. Ashgabat is littered with huge posters of him. Uzbekistan's Mr. Karimov does without the personality cult, but has no truck with opposition either. His country has not only the biggest army in Central Asia, but also the biggest internal security force, numbering 15,000. In both Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the parliaments merely rubber-stamp government policy, and any dissent or even criticism is rapidly squashed.

Kazakhstan's Mr. Nazarbaev practices a more sophisticated form of authoritarianism. He governs with a handful of loyal henchmen, such as Nurlan Balgimbaev, the current prime minister, carefully playing them off against each other so that none of them can challenge his position. Mild public criticism is tolerated, although there are signs of increasing heavy-handedness. For instance, last December Pyotr Svoik, a leading opposition figure, was beaten up, in all probability by Kazakh security forces.

The region's leaders match their aversion to any opposition with a penchant for nepotism. In Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, in particular, the strongmen's relatives have done well. Ilham Aliev, the presidents son, is a senior figure in SOCAR, the Azeri state oil company. The president's son-in-law is the country's deputy foreign minister and ambassador to London. Mr. Nazarbaev has spread his favors even more widely – his daughter runs the state television company, his son-in-law is head of the tax police and a relative of his is head of the powerful Foreign Investment Committee.

Nation-builders

For the large part, the leaders in the rave all played a vital part in ensuring their countries' independence and stability. Only four or five years ago, few western observers believed it could be done. The Caspian's economies were a mess, and several countries were engaged in bloody violence. Russia was a powerful but disruptive force in the region.

Within just a few years, the strangeness have asserted internal control, and most of the violence has been quelled. Not that the dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh has been resolved: Armenians still occupy 20% of Azerbaijan and, according to the government, one in five Azeris is still a refugee in his own country. But for now it has moved from the front line to the negotiating table. Abkhazia, for its part, remains cut off from the rest of Georgia, its status unresolved, but even there violence has become local and occasional. And after five years of civil conflict, Tajikistan's president has achieved a fragile coalition with the Islamic opposition.

Another specter that has long haunted western diplomats has also been kept at bay: surging Islamic fundamentalism. In the early 1900's an army of clerics, bearing Korans, descended on Central Asia, but there are few signs of a dangerous Islamic revival. Traditional Turkmen women wear headscarves, as they have always done, but the fancy mosques built around Ashgabat are often empty. Only in Tajikistan is religion a powerful political force, and even there the Islamic opposition claims to have no time for Iranian-style fundamentalists. Some leaders, notably Mr. Karimov, overtly repress religious activism. Elsewhere the authoritarians, confident of their power, tolerate Islam.

... But not democrats

So far the political skills of the Caspian leaders have served their countries well. But ensuring independence and stability is no longer enough. These countries must now create durable political structures and institutions, and their present leaders may not be the best people for the job.

Only the naive (of whom there are many, particularly in western aid agencies) would claim that the Caspian states can become model democracies overnight. Central Asia, in particular, has no experience of representative democracy. Before the Soviet dictators, it was emirs, khans; and other traditional elders who ruled. Today's opposition – where it exists at all – is usually small, divided and hard to take seriously.

Worryingly, politics in most of Central Asia is not even moving in the right direction. Mr. Akaev, the west's democratic darling, seems to have become less broad-minded of late, allegedly jailing Kirgiz journalists for critical articles. In Kazakhstan, the people themselves believe their country is becoming more authoritarian. An opinion poll conducted in 1996 showed that 35% of Kazakhs classified their country as a democracy. Uzbekistan is still a police state, even though Mr. Karimov may have become more subtle in his repression. And in Turkmenistan Mr. Niyazov's gnip on power is becoming ever more maniacal as illness raises rumors about his future.

One of the few to buck this trend is Georgia's Mr. Shevardnadze. He, too, is keeping his presidency strong, but he has also encouraged the emergence of perhaps the most independent and reform-minded parliament in the region, full of young, energetic (and often western-educated) democrats.

Such institution-building is vital if these countries are not to be dominated by elites, and if they are to survive a change of leadership without serious upheaval. But the record so far is not promising. That is the single biggest cloud over the region's future.

6. FLYING HIGH: FLAGS OF NEW NATION-STATES

(Edmund Midura, Flying High, in *Aramco World*, May/ June 1997, pp. 32-35. Reprinted by permission.)

Becoming a nation-state in the modern meaning of the term is a gigantic and complex undertaking that some countries achieve over decades – as Saudi Arabia did – or over centuries, as in the case of China. Others find nationhood suddenly thrust upon

them, and that's the way it was for Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in the early 1990's. The will to nationhood was there, but its reality found those countries unready in some practical ways. One of those ways was the existence of a national flag.

Czarist Russia conquered the Turkic peoples of Central Asia during the 18th and 19th centuries, organizing the area into several entities to keep the peoples divided and dependent. Under the Soviets the Muslim areas were first organized as "autonomous regions" and then as full-fledged component republics of the USSR. Those territorial divisions of the 1920's and 1930's became the boundaries of the Central Asian nations that emerged in the 1990's.

Thus, the new states of Central Asia became independent by default. They were expelled from the USSR by the Slavic states and found themselves thrust into new roles with little preparation. None of these ethnically defined "national republics" – Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan – had ever been independent. The pre-Russian history of the region consisted of Islamic expansion in counterpoint with tribal resistance, not the establishment of nation-states. While most of the republics developed movements of ethnic and religious revival during perestroika, *none had a well-developed nationalist movement.*

Each of the republics of the Soviet Union was given a "national" flag, all of them variations on the red all-union banner bearing a gold star, hammer and sickle in the top corner at the staff. In the nation's earliest days, those were the only flags available, and they continued to be flown for varying periods. Azerbaijan started loosening its ties to the Soviet Union in 1990 and was the first of the Muslim states to declare independence, on August 20, 1991. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan declared themselves free the following day. Tajikistan followed in September, Turkmenistan in October and Kazakhstan in December. The following are descriptions of the countries' flags and their meanings:

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan's flag has three horizontal stripes, blue over red over green, with a white crescent and an eight-pointed star centered on the red stripe. The design goes back to the banner of a political party of 1917, whose slogan was "Turkify, Islamicize, Europeanize!" The blue, a traditional Turkic color, represented the Turkic peoples, the green represented Islam and the red the adoption of European methods, by which modernization and progress were to be brought to Azerbaijan. The star and crescent are a traditional symbol of Muslim nations in general and the Ottomans in particular. Azerbaijan's star was given eight points to represent the eight Turkic peoples.

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan adopted its flag on September 30, 1991. It has three horizontal stripes, blue over white over green. The stripes are separated by two very narrow bands of red called fimbriations, from the Latin word for a border or fringe. On the blue stripe, starting at the staff, are a white crescent and twelve stars. The blue is said to represent fundamental sources of life – such as water – and is the favored color of the 14th century Turkic leader Timur (Tamerlane). Peace and purity are represented by the white, Islam and new life by the green, and the life force by the red of the fimbriations. The new moon stands for the rebirth of the nation, and the twelve stars represent the months of the calendar and the signs of the zodiac. In addition, their number symbolizes the multiplication of the four "elements" – air, earth, fire water – by the three levels of existence – heaven, earth and the between.

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan's flag was adopted on March 3rd, 1992. On a field of red – traditional color of Kyrgyz – is centered a yellow sun with 40 rays, representing the 40 tribes led by the ancient national hero, Manas, who united them to form the Kyrgyz nation. Centered on the sun is a red circle containing two crossed sets of three curved lines, a stylized representation of the opening at

the peak of a yurta – the traditional circular tent of skins used by the nomads of Central Asia and Mongolia. The sun symbolizes light, nobility and eternity to the Kyrgyz. This flag is of particular interest because on the front the rays of the sun curve in a counter-clockwise direction, while on the reverse of the flag the rays curve clockwise.

Tajikistan

Tajikistan was the last republic to adopt its own national flag, largely because of a tragic period of instability and conflict that came with nationhood. That flag has three horizontal stripes of red over white over green, with the white stripe being broader than the other two. Centered on the white stripe is a gold crown with seven stars above it. This device is said to represent the "state sovereignty of Tajikistan; the unbreakable union of workers, peasants, and intellectual classes of the nation; and friendship and brotherhood among all nationalities." Represented in the white and green of the flag's colors are two important agricultural crops of Tajikistan, cotton and grapes.

Turkmenistan

The flag of Turkmenistan is the world's only national flag bearing design elements from Oriental carpets. The design is a green background crossed by a broad, vertical claret band near the staff. On this band are five different black, white and orange *guls* – symmetrical [flower] designs used on rugs – associated with five of the nation's tribes: the Tekhe, Yomut, Sayk, Salor and Ersari. Guls were represented on the arms of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic as far back as the 1920's. To the right of the top of the band are a white crescent moon and five stars representing the regions of Akhal, Balkan, Doshkhovez, Lebap, and Mary.

Kazakhstan

The Kazakh flag, which was chosen in a competition, was adopted on June 4, 1992. On a sky-blue field symbolizing the "endless sky" over the steppes is centered a golden sun with 32 gold rays. Below it soars a golden eagle of the steppes, symbol of the Kazakh people's love of freedom and their aspirations. The sky-blue field of the flag also stands for peace, unity and well-being. Placed vertically at the staff is a gold "national ornamentation," an abstract graphic design.

7. INDIA'S GROWING CENTRAL ASIA PRESENCE MAY INCREASE INSTABILITY

(Damon Bristow, India's Growing Central Asia Presence May Increase Instability, Biweekly Breefings, *Central Asia and Caucasus Analyst*, September 13, 2000. Permission pending.)

India's willingness to play a more active role in Central Asia has the potential to further confuse the already complicated geopolitics of the region. Much has been made in foreign policy circles of India's attempts to improve ties with the booming economies of East Asia, and the world's remaining superpower, the United States. India's renewed interests in developments in Central Asia have been less well documented. Rather than adopting a go-it-alone policy towards Central Asia, India is strengthening relations with its old ally Russia to blunt Chinese expansion and form one of the major axes for future competition in the Central Asia region.

Background

Thanks to the close relationship that existed between Moscow and New Delhi during the Cold War, New Delhi has traditionally had strong links with the Central Asian region. In the decade since the end of the superpower conflict in the region and the collapse of the Soviet Union, India has increasingly made an effort to build on these long-standing ties in order to establish links with the newly formed Central Asian Republics. Currently, the most important factor driving relations between India and the Central Asian Republics has been the rise of religious extrenmism and terrorism.

New Delhi and its friends in Central Asia are particularly concerned about the rise of religious extremism in Afghanistan (the Taliban). There is a real possibility that the conflict in Afghanistan will spill over into and destabilize the region's fragile, secular political structures. India is concerned about the impact of the Taliban's rise on Kashmir, where a bloody insurgency

has been underway since 1989, not least because Pakistan, with which it has fought three wars since independence in 1947, two over Kashmir, is one of the group's main backers.

Looking ahead, India's growing need for hydrocarbons to drive its booming economy is likely to play an increasingly important role in its policy towards Central Asia. New Delhi is currently in discussion with a number of countries, including Iran, about gaining access to the region's oil. Obviously, as India's reliance on Central and Western Asian oil rises, so too will India's stake rise in ensuring the stability of the region. In Central Asia, meanwhile, there is speculation that India's growing interest in the region's oil reserves win one day clash with that of China, which has already won major concessions from Kazakhstan.

Implications

India shares many of the same concerns in Central Asia as Russia, China, and Iran, the other major powers In the region. The largest concerns revolve around the domestic and international challenges posed by the spread of terrorisn and religious fanaticism. Beyond this, they have similar opinions on a number of other issues, including a combined fear of the rising global dominance of the United States and the willingness of the West to intervene in the internal affairs of other countries to further its human rights agenda. But it is unlikely that these countries have enough in common, as a number of diplomats and politicians have suggested, for a strategic alliance based on shared security concerns to emerge.

India and China fought a brief war in 1962 and continue to dispute a large proportion of their common border. Relations between the two countries have improved somewhat since the end of the Cold War. Efforts are being made to find a solution to the border problem and Beijing has also scaled down its support for Pakistan's Kashmir policy. India nevertheless remains concerned about the close military and political relationship that exists between China and Pakistan. According to American intelligence officials, Beijing has transferred ballistic missile and nuclear technology to Islamabad. China, for its part, was openly critical of India's decision to conduct a series of nuclear tests in May 1998.

New Delhi is likely to attempt to build closer ties with Moscow. As with Russia and China, the two have signed a number of military, economic and security agreements, and waxed lyrical about the threat of terrorism in Central Asia and the need to preserve secular governments. Furthermore, President Putin is due to visit New Delhi this October. The two countries are expected to sign a document making them "strategic partners" during his stay. The two were on different sides during the Cold War. Today, Moscow is concerned about the increase of Chinese influence in the Central Asian republics.

Conclusions

India's policy is therefore to give both practical and diplomatic support to those secular governments currently in power in the Central Asian Republics and to build trade links with them. In Afghanistan, New Delhi has refused to acknowledge the Taliban as the official government of the country and instead continues to support the Northern Alliance. Crucially, from an Indian strategic point of view, Russia like India has a historical mistrust of China. But from an Indian perspective, China's role in the region remains the main stumbling block.

Rather than increasing the possibility of stability in Central Asia and the chances of some form of alliance between the major players being established there, India's growing presence in the region will only serve to further complicate the region's geopolitics. Rather than adopting a go-it-alone policy towards Central Asia, India is likely to try and achieve its ambition in tandem with its old ally Russia. Based on a long sense of shared history and common desire to blunt Chinese expansion, the India-Russian partnership will form one of the major axes for future competition between those powers engaged in the new Great Game already underway in the region.

8. A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE: THE GREAT GAME IS NOT OVER

(Anthony Davis, *Why China is Cozying up to Central Asia*, from Asiaweek.com. September 10, 1999 Vol. 25 No. 36. Permission pending.)

Since the first Shanghai conclave in 1996, annual summits between China and its Central Asian neighbors have become a regular event on the Asian diplomatic calendar. The meeting of the "Shanghai Five" – China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan – in the leafy Kyrgyz capital of Bishkek in September 1999 was a case study of the cross-border mayhem that Chinese and Central Asian leaders are heading off. The post-Cold War dangers involve cross-border terrorism and crime, ethnic separatism, and the growing appeal of Islamist militancy in a region where grinding poverty remains endemic. China and Central Asian countries are working together on establishing mutually advantageous security mechanisms.

As the Shanghai Five leaders discussed regional security, ill-prepared troops were facing hundreds of Islamist guerrillas in the country's mountainous southwest. There, the intruders had seized several villages and hostages, including four Japanese geologists and a Kyrgyz general. Backed by a sprinkling of Arabs and Afghans, the militants were mostly Uzbek Islamists based earlier in Tajikistan where they had fought in the civil war. Others had been involved in the Afghan conflict. But with the onset of peace in Tajikistan in 1997 and the final disbanding of the United Tajik Opposition forces last month, pressures to head home had pushed them into Kyrgyzstan on a march to Uzbekistan where they hoped to spark a holy war against Tashkent's rigidly authoritarian regime. The clashes soon drew in Uzbekistani air strikes on militant targets in both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The crisis threw into graphic relief new transnational threats of an era far removed from the 1970's and 1980's when millions of Soviet and Chinese troops faced off across Central Asia.

China and its Central Asian neighbors are moving rapidly to establish new security mechanisms to counter new threats. In the first years following the inaugural 1996 summit, the Shanghai Five focused on winding down Cold War troop strengths and establishing such confidence-building measures as moving forces back from borderzones. Three years later a whole new security and economic agenda is opening up that includes such cross-border issues as international terrorism and arms smuggling.

The speed at which the Shanghai Five are moving has surprised analysts. "Four years is a short time to get down to brass tacks," says *Janes Defence Weekly's* Robert Karniol. "They're moving very fast in a practical direction. Unlike the ASEAN Regional Forum, this is not a talk-shop – they're actually doing things."

Beijing's concern for stability and economic growth along its Central Asian border is the prime motivator. Russia too has had a vital interest in promoting stability in her exposed southern Near Abroad. But for all Five, Bishkek's expanded agenda has been given added urgency by events in Afghanistan, a revolving-door training camp for Islamic militancy that has reached Kyrgyzstan and the borders of Uzbekistan.

For Beijing, the destabilization of Xinjiang remains a consuming worry. Anti-Chinese dissatisfaction remains widespread among the region's 8 million Uighurs, pushing recruits into the Islamic-inspired, nationalist underground. While maintaining an iron grip across the territory, Beijing is all too well aware of Uighur minorities in both Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan sympathetic to their cousins in China – and of the need for cooperation from Bishkek and Astana in clamping down on illicit cross-border movements of people and weapons. Not by coincidence, exchange visits between senior Chinese defense and security officials and their Kyrgyz and Kazakh counterparts have increased in the last three years.

Defining areas of common security concern may prove easier than managing economic integration, given residual Russian and Central Asian fears of Chinese expansionism, both commercial and demographic. But the latest summit has confirmed that, as Russia's Boris Yeltsin put it, "we have huge potential for cooperation in that area." Much of that potential will

hinge on untapped energy reserves in Siberia and Kazakhstan that China requires for continued economic growth.

A key indicator of the progress of economic integration will be the future of the 3,200km, $2.4 billion pipeline projected to carry oil from Aktyubinsk in Kazakhstan's northwest to Xinjiang. Tough negotiations over financing and ownership of the pipeline have cast doubts on its viability. Last month, the China National Petroleum Corp. said it was shelving plans for construction.

Not all analysts believe this chapter of Central Asia's new Great Game is over, however. "China has an acute need for overland supplies to reduce dependency on Mideast oil that comes on sea-lanes it cannot control," says Ross H. Munro, a China analyst at the Center for Security Studies in Washington. "There's no timetable, but I'll wager this pipeline is going to go ahead." As will the Shanghai Five's ambitious security agenda.

9. EIGHT DEADLY WARNINGS

(By Paul A. Goble, 8 Deadly Warnings, *in New York Times,* February 18, 1999. Reprinted by permission.)

Eight car bombs set off in Tashkent seriously undermine Uzbekistan's claim to be an island of stability in post-Soviet Central Asia. More broadly, the bombing highlights the fragility of regimes across that region, from Azerbaijan to Turkmenistan to Kazakhstan, where political and religious crackdowns have planted new seeds of unrest.

Uzbekistan gained its independence in 1991, and because it has the largest population in the region, it can plausibly claim to be the most important country there. Since then Islam Karimov, the former leader of the Uzbek Communist Party and now the nation's President, has restricted basic freedoms and arrested and harassed pro-democracy activists. And in the name of fighting Islamic fundamentalism, he has closed nearly 1,000 mosques in the last year alone.

Although some in the West have decried these abuses, many Western governments have backed him because he is a strong leader who has declared his opposition to Islamic fundamentalism and his independence from Moscow.

But the bombings this week, which killed 13 and injured 120, suggest that those who are betting on Mr. Karimov may lose, despite his boast that "we have enough strength to stamp out all these actions."

Because the Government has made many enemies, there is a wide range of suspects. Some Uzbeks have suggested that the regime's domestic opponents – either Islamic or democratic – were behind the attack. Others suppose the culprits were Islamic groups from Tajikistan who wanted to punish Mr. Karimov for having opposed them during the civil war that has engulfed that country since 1991. Still others believe the Russians were responsible and point to Uzbekistan's suggestion that it will not sign any extension of the collective security treaty that Moscow has proposed extending to its former republics.

In fact, all these groups have reason to dislike the Uzbek Government, and several might well have cooperated in the attack.

Indeed, the many enemies Mr. Karimov has made, coupled with the many repressions he has enforced, have left his country more vulnerable to instability than his Western supporters realize.

Just as important, the Uzbek Government has failed to deliver either the economic development that the population craves or a coherent ideological justification for Mr. Karimov's authoritarian regime. Without some combination of the two, it will be very difficult for him to develop genuine and self-sustaining political authority.

President Karimov is 61, and like the aging leadership in other post-Soviet states in Central Asia and the Caucasus, he almost certainly will have to begin transferring power to a new generation sometime soon

– a generation that wasn't reared in the climate of Soviet domination.

The bombings in Tashkent may indicate that the changing of the political guard in the former Soviet republics could be anything but peaceful, especially if Mr. Karimov and the other leaders conclude that force, rather than democratic legitimacy, is the way to maintain stability in the time they have left.

10. TO BEARD OR NOT TO BEARD

(Salimjon Aioubov, Central Asia: Islam Ponders--To Beard or Not To Beard, on *Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty*, June 1, 1998. Copyright © 2000, RFE/RL, Inc. Reprinted with the permission of radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 1201 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington DC 20036 http://www.rferl.org)

It is ridiculous, but wearing a beard has attained more importance politically in some Central Asian countries than any other reforms, parties, movements, cease-fires or agreements.

While Afghanistan's Taliban measure beards of people and punish those whose whiskers are shorter than required, in neighboring Uzbekistan authorities repress people if they have beards too bushy or long.

Before the Civil War in Tajikistan, a beard was a demonstration of political support for the Islamic opposition. During the unrest which broke out after 1992, it became a military attribute of generals and opposition fighters.

For anyone appealing to government bureaucrats, having a beard or not having one encourages different results. Many bureaucrats perceive an outgrowth of chin hair as equating to a link to armed groups, either governmental or of the Islamic opposition.

In fact, however, the perceived distinction may have more to do with an acute shortage of money, water, soap and safety razors.

Islam Karimov, the president of Uzbekistan, has said, "If you have noticed, Wahabis have a characteristic feature. They have beards." A Kyrgyz newspaper echoed Karimov's statement: "The basic sign, according to which Uzbek special services separate Wahabis from other citizens, has become a beard. (A beard) bearer can at any moment be stopped and subjected to humiliating search, and even arrest."

Tajik President Imomali Rahmonov does not denounce a beard as a political sign because many of his army generals sport beards. In 1992, during the short time of National Reconciliation Government, every TV broadcast had someone with a beard. What is more, the inhabitants of the capital city, Dushanbe, displayed an unprecedented number and variety of beards.

When power in Dushanbe changed in December 1992, many people immediately shaved their bears. Others, who didn't consider their facial hair political, kept it. Wrong! Armed supporters of the government often caught those wearing beards and pulled out each hair.

A beard in Tajikistan these days generally has only one meaning. People just don't have time or opportunity to shave. In neighboring countries, however, a beard can still be an indication that the wearer has taken a political side.

11. TROUBLE IN THE 'STANS

(Yuri Zarakhovich, Trouble in the 'Stans, from *Time Europe*, Wednesday, October 13. © 2000 Time Inc. Used with permission.)

For over a month now government troops in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have been fighting Islamic rebels who came through Tajikistan from the Taliban-held areas of Afghanistan. Worried lest the tide of Islamic extremism hits its inland Muslim regions, Russia has vowed to render military support to Central Asian regimes. As the Taliban took the key strategic city of Talukan last week, and keep pushing on to Tajikistan's border with only some 60 km left between them and the Russian troops who protect that border, serious concerns over the stability of Central Asia and a possible Russian involvement into a new war are mounting. Time's Yuri Zarakhovich talked about Central Asian tremors with Alexei Malashenko, scholar-in-residence at

the Moscow Carnegie Center, an authority on Islam and the political and religious conflicts in the Caucasus and Central Asia in the following interview:

TIME: All Russian media, liberal or communist alike, are beating the drum about the prospective Taliban invasion of Central Asia and a growing threat to Russia.

Malashenko: Central Asian ruling élites have long been explaining their domestic problems by external interference. Russia buys and supports this line, as it confirms its own claims that it fights foreign-supported terrorists in Chechnya.

TIME: Isn't there external support in both cases?

Malashenko: They do support local militants from abroad. But young people are willingly coming to foreign training camps from both the Caucasus and Central Asia, and willingly pick up the money and the weapons offered them. The external factor adds to the picture, but the real reason for turmoil is domestic.

TIME: What is that reason?

Malashenko: National idea, reform, democracy — all has been proclaimed and all has failed in the countries of Central Asia since they attained independence back in 1991. Nothing works. People exist in poverty under oppressive regimes. So, what is there left for the desperate to turn to? Only fundamentalist Islam, that promises a viable state and paternalistic social justice. Millions of people in Central Asia believe in this illusion. Which makes fundamentalist Islam a real political force, particularly in Uzbekistan.

TIME: This force is engaging the area in war.

Malashenko: Only because neither Russia nor Central Asian governments have ever tried to engage it in the due political process. We have seen it all in Tajikistan: back in 1992, they opposed the pro-communist government there under Democratic and Islamic banners. Russia and Uzbekistan sided against the opposition in the Tajikistan civil war, and helped push it out into Afghanistan. The opposition came back anyway, but exclusively under the Islamic banners this time.

TIME: Will the Taliban cross into Central Asian countries from Afghanistan?

Malashenko: Hardly. They'll have their hands full at home. They will need to consolidate their power, and address Pakistan's fears of a possible Pushtun sedition on its soil, should the Taliban set a precedent of intruding beyond their borders. But their success will definitely encourage Islamists in Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries.

TIME: Last May, Russia threatened preventive strikes against the Taliban and the Islamist training camps on their territory. Is Russia getting involved in yet another war?

Malashenko: Russia's problem is that it seeks to resolve eternal issues with weapons and troops. Firstly, it does not work, period. Secondly, Russia does not even have enough troops now. For Russia, this situation is as catastrophic and desperate as it is self-created. It will be worse than the Soviet war in Afghanistan. It's a dead-end situation. But Russia is heading that way in the most obdurate Soviet fashion.

TIME: How?

Malashenko: Russia starts with sending weapons and instructors, and will end up with a full-scale military involvement in yet another war it cannot win, unless it is tempted to use tactical nukes. But using tactical nukes opens a whole new Pandora's box.

TIME: What's the solution, then?

Malashenko: We must recognize the radical Islamic opposition as an eternal factor. We must engage this factor into mainstream political processes. Once fanatics and plain bandits are isolated from recognized political forces, they either wither, or get wiped out. This is the only way to contain extremism. But it'll be a long time before we come to that, if ever. Meanwhile, we'd better brace for a major trouble.

12. AFGHANISTAN AS CENTER: CENTRAL ASIA'S NEW GEOPOLITICS

(By Svante Cornell and Maria Sultan, Afghanistan as Center: Central Asia's New Geopoilitics, in *Biweekly Beefing of Central Asia and Caucasus Analyst*, November 22, 2000. Permission pending)

The ongoing insurgency in southern Central Asia is the outer demonstration of a recent, more broadly developing trend. Central Asia, especially the three southern states of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, is becoming increasingly tied in security matters with the areas to their South and East, that is with South and East Asia. This negates the nearly decade-old paradigm of a "Turkish-Iranian-Russian triangle" in the geopolitics of the region. Turkey and Iran play only a small role in Central Asian security, but the Central Asia region is becoming part of an emerging security complex centering on Afghanistan. In the new equation, US-Russian collusion in Central Asia signals a break in the confrontation that has marked NATO-Russian relations since the 1999 Kosovo war.

Background

The independence of Central Asia's five Muslim republics in 1991 fundamentally altered the geopolitical scene at the center of the Eurasian continent. A paradigm evolved defining Russia, Turkey and Iran as the major players in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Two security threats were defined: the risk of "loose nukes" and the threat of radical Islam. As Afghanistan fell into total disarray, the Taliban movement eventually surged to power with the assistance of Pakistan's intelligence agency. India, Iran, and Russia saw the emergence of the Taliban through the prism of a zero-sum game due to fear of the spread of the Taliban ideology to neighboring countries, and also to the strategic location of Afghanistan. Major players have covertly used the Afghanistan situation to their benefit. A major geopolitical game has emerged, connecting former Soviet Central Asia directly to Afghanistan.

Russian and American authorities view these developments within a framework centered on vaguely defined threats like "terrorism" and "radical Islam." Central Asia is seen as a brewing ground for radical Islam. Socio-political and economic factors, coupled with authoritarian styles of government, in fact have fueled the resurgence of Islam in the region. Regional politics have zeroed in on the perceived threat of radical Islam, and has moved away from the perceived Iran-Turkey rivalry that dominated the early 1990's. Iran's main concern lies to its south in the Persian Gulf, and Turkey's to its west, in Europe. For the security of Central Asia, neither Turkey nor Iran currently plays a major role. Throughout the 1990's, the security of Central Asia has increasingly come to be linked with Afghanistan, Pakistan and China, countries that matter immensely more for Central Asia's political and economic security than either Turkey or Iran.

Since the Taliban movement's emergence in 1994 and its subsequent conquest of 90% of Afghanistan's territory, Afghanistan has become perceived as the prime security threat to southern Central Asia. The illegal narcotics trade centered on Afghanistan has accentuated this perception. Instability and unrest in Afghanistan has provided anti-regime forces from Central Asian states with a sanctuary. The most blatant is the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) that reportedly has over a thousand fighters only miles away from the borders of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. This has rekindled the domino theory of radical Islam upsetting regional stability and endangering secular regimes. However, it is very doubtful whether the aim of the Taliban was ever to spread radical Islam but rather to consolidate Afghanistan and its political orientation.

Implications

The recent fighting in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan is not likely to be an isolated event. The mode of action of the Islamic rebels seems to indicate a protracted state of turmoil. Alignments of regional and great powers are developing rapidly around Central Asia's southern borders. China is aiming to increase its standing in the region, partly due to energy needs but also to concern of instability in Central Asia affecting its Xinjiang province. Unlike Russia, China seems to have resorted to engaging the Taliban instead of subscribing to the as yet unsuccessful policy of combating it

militarily. Meanwhile, India is increasing its profile and revitalizing its Russian alliance. Pakistan's success in achieving a pro-Pakistani government in Kabul is interpreted in India as a major setback, providing Islamabad with the strategic depth it has long desired.

The United States until recently conducted a policy of "going it alone" in Central Asia, but for over a year, it has conducted a policy of deference to Russia. Washington's fears have centered on a rising Chinese threat along with the fear of political Islam and has tipped the United States over into a closer understanding with Moscow regarding the region. Russia was, in the Central Asian context, the only force that suited its two overarching global objectives of thwarting Chinese power and radical Islam. Developments in Beijing's uneasy relations with Moscow and New Delhi will hence bear great significance for the geopolitics of Central Asia

Meanwhile, a commonality of interest can be observed between Pakistan, the Taliban regime and Turkmenistan. Whereas Pakistan's relations with the Taliban are widely known, resource-rich but landlocked Turkmenistan's stance is less clear. The collapse of the Trans-Caspian pipeline project, supposed to carry Turkmen natural gas over Azerbaijan to Turkey, has rekindled interest in a pipeline through Afghanistan to Pakistan. Firm Taliban control over Afghanistan may be seen as a requirement for the realization of this project, which is crucial for Turkmenistan to benefit from its huge reserves of natural gas and also to meet Pakistan's need for energy and hard currency.

Conclusions

Central Asia, to a large extent, is important because of its neighbors. And given the internal weakness of its component states, coupled with the military power of the states surrounding it, there is a clear danger of turmoil in Central Asia adversely affecting Asian security as a whole. The geopolitical map of Central Asia and its southern neighbors is all but determined. Alignments in Central Asia are fluctuating and under development in contrast to the Caucasus where a clearly defined security complex has emerged. This uncertainty feeds instability in the region and Central Asia may face a long period of turmoil.

Ethnic and religious tensions, energy politics, and great power rivalries all intersect in the area connecting Central Asia to the whole of Asia. Afghanistan impacts instability in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and beyond, though the problems in these countries are not simply linked to Afghanistan alone. The interactions between Central Asia and Asia have already developed to an extent that highlights the largely unexplored geopolitical linkages between Central Asia, South Asia, and China. Almost ten years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Central Asia is profoundly altering the patterns of interaction among Asian great powers, a development of which we may only be witnessing the beginnings. Presently, the shadows remain the key arbiters.

13. CONFRONTATION BREWS AMONG ISLAMIC MILITANTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

(Confrontation Brews Among Islamic Militants in Central Asia, By Ahmed Rashid, in *Biweekly Briefing, Central Asia and Caucasus Analyst*, November 22, 2000. Permission pending)

A confrontation with enormous international consequences is brewing in the heartland of Asia. The two largest underground opposition Islamic movements in Uzbekistan have regional ambitions to overthrow all of the Central Asian regimes and reconstitute the borders of these states in order to recreate an Islamic Turkestan. The leader of Hizb-e Tehrir (HT) or Party of Liberation, believed to be the largest and most popular Islamic movement in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, plans to establish an Islamic Caliphate in the historical region once known as Turkestan.

Background

The Hizb-e Tehrir claims that the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), previously believed to be aiming to overthrow Uzbek President Islam Karimov, also has similar pan-Central Asian ambitions. Islamic militancy remains the most potent threat to the five

Central Asian Republics, even considering the threats posed to the region by the recent Taliban advances in northern Afghanistan, Russian attempts to reestablish a powerful military and political presence in the region, and their struggle to deal with the region's dire economic recession, inflation, and unemployment which is helping provide recruits for these Islamic movements. Having disallowed democracy and all opposition for the past decade, the autocratic Central Asian leaders now face a militant underground Islamic opposition that draws support from the Taliban as well as extremist Islamic groups in Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf states.

The Hizb-e Tahrir, which has growing support in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan reflected by the increasing number of arrests of HT members by the internal security apparatus of these states, operates a highly secretive cell system which makes it difficult for the authorities to contain their spread. They have a vision of uniting Central Asia in an Islamic Caliphate – which would reestablish the idealized period of Islam just after the death of the Prophet Mohammed. A Hizb-e Tahrir leader, who was interviewed by the author recently in Central Asia said his movement was founded in Saudi Arabia in the 1950's and remained underground during the Soviet era. HT has now established thousands of five man cells across Central Asia to achieve its aims. It believes in peaceful change through a mass movement against the Central Asian regimes, but does not rule out the possibility of eventually having to take up arms if the repression against it continues.

The Hizb-e Tahrir, which draw inspiration from the conservative rather than modernist figures of the Jadid movement in 19th century Uzbekistan as well as the Wahabbi movement in Saudi Arabia, is virulently against Shia Muslims and Shi'ism, would expel all Jews from Central Asia and is opposed to US policies in the region. The HT says it admires the Taliban movement in Afghanistan and many HT members have fled to Afghanistan to seek sanctuary. Although it also admires the wanted Saudi terrorist Osama Bin Laden, it has no links with him. The HT say they have differences with the IMU as they do not believe in the guerrilla war being presently carried out by the IMU and suspect the IMU has contacts with both the Russian and the Uzbek regimes. They also say they have support from within the Karimov regime which they claim is crumbling from within due to the acute economic hardships being faced by the population.

Implications

The Taliban have given sanctuary to between 2500-3000 heavily armed fighters from the IMU, which this summer and last year launched guerrilla attacks inside Uzbekistan in a bid to set up bases in the volatile Ferghana valley and topple President Karimov. This summer in order to reach Uzbek territory from their Afghan bases, the IMU fought pitched battles with the armed forces of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The IMU is being bankrolled by Afghanistan's drugs trade, Osama bin Laden and Islamic groups in Pakistan along with the Arab Gulf states. Its strength has grown from some 600 fighters who first came to Afghanistan in the spring of 1999 to nearly 3,000 now. It is recruiting widely from all the Central Asian and Caucasian ethnic groups – especially Chechens – as well as Uyghur Muslims from the Chinese region of Xinjiang.

In a bid to help the Karimov regime, the Clinton administration declared the IMU a terrorist organization on September 15. Hezbollah, the Party of God, is an even more extremist and secretive group well established in the Ferghana Valley. Hezbollah follows Saudi Arabia's strict Wahhabi sect and is funded by Saudi groups. None of these fundamentalist movements in Central Asia appear to take much inspiration from the historically moderate Islamic trends in Central Asia. They are all opposed to the Sufi traditions and "Tariqahs" (Sufi Orders) in Central Asia. Likewise, they have little understanding or appreciation of the modernist trends within the 19th century Jadid movement, are opposed to religious minorities such as Shias and Jews who have lived for centuries in Central Asia and are highly restrictive on the role of women under Islam.

Hizb-e Tahrir, Hezbollah, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan all appear to be pan-Islamicists

with a vision of creating a new Ummah or community of believers in Central Asia rather than Islamic-nationalists who are aware of the enormous risks of trying to redraw the boundaries of the region and the acute ethnic tensions within Central Asia. They appear to draw more inspiration from the hardline Wahhabi and Deobandi Islamic traditions of Saudi Arabia and South Asia rather than Central Asia's own traditions. All these movements will continue to grow and expand their recruiting base, as long as the severe economic conditions in the Central Asian states persist and the regimes continue to refuse to carry out deep economic reforms.

Conclusions

The Central Asian regimes have jailed thousands of Islamic militants and many innocent citizens in a bid to halt the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, but the regimes' harsh punitive measures have only added to public anger and frustration. According to Western human rights workers, some 4,000 IMU and HT supporters are in jail in Uzbekistan and hundreds more in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. President Karimov is fighting by juggling two fronts, on the one hand trying to control the spread of Islamic militancy, while on the other hand resisting Russian pressure to station troops in Uzbekistan and seeking support from the US, the West, China, Turkey and India.

The refusal by the Central Asian governments to implement democratic reforms or allow legal opposition parties and movements to operate will force dissidents to join underground Islamic movements. Such movements are the only visible opposition forces resisting these regimes. At the same time, the inability of these regimes to differentiate between moderate Islamic forces and ideas and more extreme ones allows for the revival of the moderate traditions of Islam in Central Asia. But the lumping of all believers under the category of "extremist Wahhabis" is severely damaging the credibility of these regimes.

14. GOOD FENCES, BAD NEIGHBORS

(By Douglas Frantz, Good Fences but, Some Will Say, Bad Neighbors, in *New York Times*, November 30, 2000. Reprinted by permission)

The Border issue in Central Asia has become a tangible issue recently for the first time. Before the Soviet Era the region was open to roaming nomads and traders from as far away as the Roman empire and India. The Soviet Borders were carefully planted on the maps, but had no actual presence, neither physically nor politically. Now that the Former Soviet Republics have opened their borders to the rest of the world, the newly independent nations have begun to put up fences separating their territories from each other. The following article portrays the rising necessity for such fences in search of protection from insurgencies and threats from Islamic separatist movements.

Sokh, Uzbekistan, November 24, 2000 — The border guard gestured with the barrel of his Kalashnikov rifle, and the aged Soviet-built Lada pulled off the road at the checkpoint. A half-dozen people piled out of the battered car, lugging plastic bags of clothes and fruit for the guard to empty and examine.

The people were Kyrgyz citizens on their way home from a day at the market. The only road passes through this enclave, 200 square miles of Uzbekistan surrounded by Kyrgyzstan where Uzbek border guards search every bus, truck and car. Traveling 50 miles in southwestern Kyrgyzstan can mean five or six border crossings and can take hours, depending on the mood of the guards.

For centuries shepherds, traders and travelers of many nationalities crisscrossed this mountainous region of Central Asia without regard for borders. During the Soviet era, when the serpentine borders of the republics were drawn in Moscow, passports and visas were largely unnecessary and trade continued much as it had for generations.

But in the last year, in response to insurgent threats and smuggling, Uzbekistan has tightened its borders with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, putting up miles

of barbed-wire fence along its southern flank and planting land mines at dozens of timeworn crossing points.

The toll so far is at least 20 deaths from mines and shootings by border guards, countless cattle killed and deeper economic woes for millions of people already facing desperate poverty. A five-day tour through the region found people isolated from relatives in nearby villages on the wrong side of an invisible line — or a six-foot fence, workers cut off from jobs and herdsmen unable to reach traditional markets and pastures.

"There is no way to get through this area without crossing several Uzbek borders," Yuruslan Toichubekov, deputy governor of Batken Province in southwestern Kyrgyzstan, said as he traced the main road on a wall map in the government offices in Batken. "People are intimidated and they are robbed by guards."

Kyrgyzstan has maintained relatively open borders since independence in 1991, but Mr. Toichubekov warned that the government would retaliate against Uzbekistan by setting up its own roadblocks and upping the number of guards.

Already Kyrgyz citizens find themselves scrutinized by their own troops after passing through Uzbek land and checkpoints.

The tense atmosphere worries officials from the United Nations and other international organizations, who fear that even a small incident could escalate into violence that would destabilize the region and jeopardize the delicate and difficult transition to democracy under way in these former Soviet republics.

For their part, the Uzbek authorities complain that the relaxed border policies of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan constitute an open door for heroin smugglers from Afghanistan and insurgents from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan who want a religious government in the republic.

Dozens of guerrillas and soldiers from Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan were killed in clashes across the Fergana Valley last summer; winter snows have now closed the mountain passes and silenced the guns.

The Uzbek authorities have also accused Kyrgyz villagers of harboring militants, but interviews in areas where there was fighting last summer found no one willing to express support for the insurgents. Still, there was plenty of anger and frustration with the border policy.

The Kyrgyz town of Uch-Korgon, a few miles south of Uzbekistan, is a mix of ethnic nationalities from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Many people worked across the border, and often families were split between the two countries. But now most people can no longer cross to Uzbekistan, because they cannot get visas, leaving them unable to get to work or visit relatives.

"My two daughters live 10 kilometers away," a distance of about six miles, "but I haven't seen them for months," Kamilja Juldasheva said as he stood on a street corner in Uch-Korgon.

Abidjan Nusratullaev, standing nearby, said the Uzbeks had stopped paying pensions to Kyrgyz citizens who had worked in factories across the border for decades.

"People worked their whole lives in Uzbekistan and they can't get a pension," he said. "They can't even go to Uzbekistan to register for a pension."

Sixty miles and four border crossings west of Uch-Korgon, near Batken, residents in the village of Check have felt the impact too. They are mostly Kyrgyz nomads who were forced to leave their ancestral homes in the mountains 50 miles to the south in 1970 as part of a huge Soviet resettlement program.

But each summer since, they drove their cattle and sheep back to pastures in the Pamir-Alai mountains.

"Now we have to cross the Uzbek border three times to get to the mountains, and each time the guards

force us to pay 15 som for each head of livestock at each crossing," said Zukchra Tulanova, a local government official.

The bribe is only 30 cents, but when multiplied by three crossings and 40 or 50 sheep or cattle, that is a towering amount for people already struggling.

Access to the old bazaars in Sokh and the Tajik city of Isfara has also been restricted, and anything brought to the province by truck, from tractor fuel to food staples, costs much more because the trucks often must bypass Uzbekistan. A villager from Check was killed by Uzbek guards recently as he tried to carry gasoline across the border.

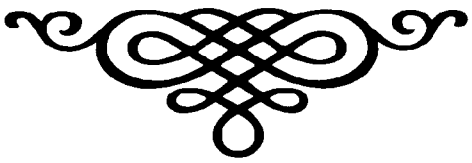
"We can't afford to plant all of our land, because fuel and seeds are too expensive," Askar Umarov said, explaining the fallow fields on the outskirts of the village.

Another 70 miles west in Khudjand, the major city in northern Tajikistan, Jan Harfst, a senior United Nations official, described the impact of the Uzbek border closings in nearly identical terms.

"A million Tajiks can't get to relatives in Samarkand and Bukhara because of the new Uzbek visa regime," Mr. Harfst said. "Sixteen people have died from land mines in Tajikistan this year. And the economy is getting squeezed."

The impact is greatest in remote areas of southern Tajikistan, where 80 percent of the people live on $1 a day or less.

Trade across the Uzbek border has been virtually halted, driving up prices and drying up jobs. International officials and the Tajik and Kyrgyz authorities have complained to Uzbekistan about the policy, but the fencing of the country goes on.



SOCIETY IN TRANSITION

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1. A NEW EFFORT TO SHINE

(Stephen Kinzer, Along the Old Silk Road, A New Effort to Shine, in *The New York Times*, October 19, 1997. Reprinted by permission.)

Historians say that no one knows when Khiva, the ancient Silk Road town was founded, but that has not prevented the President of Uzbekistan from declaring October as its 2,500th anniversary.

Khiva, Bukhara and nearby Samarkand are built around spectacular mosques and palaces that testify to this region's astonishingly rich history. Each was once the center of an empire, attracting titanic figures like Alexander, Genghis Khan and Tamerlane.

Because it stood at the heart of the Silk Road, the land that is now Uzbekistan attracted traders from across Europe and Asia. With 23 million people, Uzbekistan is the most populous of the five Central Asian countries that emerged in 1991 as the Soviet Union collapsed... The celebrations in Khiva and Bukhara, like their failed attempt to bring the Olympic Games to Tashkent, the capital, reflect their desire to lift Uzbekistan out of anonymity and make it a player in world affairs.

The Central Asian republics are being courted by outside powers in part because of their strategic location between Russia. China, Iran and the Indian subcontinent. Their markets and resources, which include large gas and oil deposits, have only begun to be exploited. A country that can emerge as dominant in this region will have a voice in international politics.

Human rights conditions here have improved since the early 1990's. Still, there is no independent press, protest meetings are forbidden and opposition political parties are banned... But despite the slow pace of change, there is no ground swell for protest against the Government. Two neighboring countries, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, have been consumed by ethnic and religious wars, and many Uzbeks seem

willing to accept the president's heavy-handed rule as long as it keeps the country stable and at peace.

"Ninety-nine percent of the people in this country don't even think about democracy and human rights," said a metalworker in Bukhara. "Their main concern is everyday life. People here have no experience with Western-style democracy." The gentleman applied several months ago for permission to start an independent newspaper, and as he expected, he was denied. Now he plans to publish a newsletter that will carry only advertising and information like bus and train schedules.

As in most parts of the former Soviet Union, life is hard for most of Uzbekistan's people. Even in Tashkent it is unusual to find an ordinary person who earns more than $1,000 per year. Prices are high, and many people find that rising costs have put health care and other social services out of their reach. Efforts to diversify the cotton-based economy depend largely on foreign investment, but corruption and broken promises have driven some investors away and deeply frustrated those who remain. Currency controls are so strict that foreign businesses often cannot withdraw their own money from banks. Local employees may not be paid in dollars, and companies that want to send Uzbeks abroad for training often find it impossible to obtain exit visas for them. To put it another way, conditions for foreign businesses here are so difficult that not even McDonald's has yet arrived.

"They sign contracts without even reading them," a German hotel manager said. "When you have a disagreement with a local partner, you tell him to look at what's in the contract and he says: "Contract! What's that?"

The impulse that makes the government reluctant to open the economy also leads it to equate political opposition with subversion. Although the government denies holding political prisoners, there are estimates that there are 32, nearly half accused of fomenting Islamic radicalism. The powerful security police keep close watch on mullahs and other religious figures, determined to prevent the growing interest in Islam from spilling over into politics.

The President of Uzbekistan, although determined to prevent fundamentalism from taking hold, has sought to conciliate and co-opt the Muslim leadership rather than repress it. Always seeking to balance competing forces, he speaks warmly about Islam despite the fact that for years he served in an officially atheistic system. Confronted with a choice about whether to make a hajj himself, or to stay home, he traveled to Mecca, visited the holy sites but did it out of hajj season so that he would not seem to be encouraging excessive devotion.

2. SILK ROAD CITY SEEKS OLD GLORY

(Silk Road City Seeks Old Glory, in *Inside China Today*, August 20, 1999. Permission pending.)

The desert Chinese city of Khotan, once a prosperous stop on the ancient Silk Road, is looking for a new route to riches to restore its former glory. More than 2,000 years ago, the Silk Road linked Asia to Europe and carried China's silk, ironware and porcelain to the West. It brought back spices, fruits and precious stones. Poor and isolated Khotan in the far western region of Xinjiang now hopes for an equally crucial link to prosperity – a new rail line – but the central government has left it waiting on the platform. The new Nanjiang railway, with a link to the national rail network, officially begins running between the cities of Korla and Kashgar in southern Xinjiang in December. But the promise of new prosperity has bypassed Khotan by some 500 kilometers (313 miles).

"After the railway is brought to Kashgar, extending the railway to Khotan can be considered according to the situation," said Liu Xinsheng, deputy governor of Khotan prefecture.

"I am not clear now about the exact year under the state's plan, but I think since the state's leaders have already said this it definitely will be in the not-too-distant future."

For the 1.58 million residents of Khotan, perched on the edge of the barren Taklimakan Desert

near the border with Tibet, the near future is not soon enough.

"Khotan is backwards because we do not have a railway," said a 25-year-old policeman as he sipped a beer in the night market.

People can still buy railway tickets at a special booth in the city center, but they must travel by car, bus or plane to other parts of the region to catch a train. Officials said the railway would first be extended to a neighboring country, probably Kyrgyzstan, before track is laid to Khotan and the city of Golmud in Qinghai province in the next century.

Far to the west of Khotan, Kashgar city fathers eagerly await the new railway, which they call the "road of happiness," saying it will help the economy. Near the new Kashgar railway station, workers lay tracks on beds of gravel while children play on the sleepers. Construction of the 947 km (592 mile) railway started in 1996 and the six billion yuan ($725 million) project was fully funded by the central government, officials said.

"After this railway is open to traffic, it will bring direct economic benefits," said Yao Yongteng, party secretary of Kashgar prefecture.

The new railway would allow Kashgar to bring in coal and other raw materials for industry, as well as chemical fertilizer for agriculture, more cheaply than by road. Kashgar could ship its agricultural products, such as cotton, fruit and vegetables to other parts of China, Yao added. Tourists looking to spend money – and companies hoping to earn it – could also travel to Kashgar.

"The flow of people and goods will bring financial resources which will promote our economic development," Yao said. "Our local people can go out and truly open their eyes to see the world."

The new railway will also bring happiness to central government leaders as China boosts spending on infrastructure to help its flagging economy, analysts said. Improvements in the lives of people could help Beijing quell dissatisfaction towards Chinese rule in restive Xinjiang, where nearly half of the region's 17 million people belong to the ethnic Uighur minority, they said.

Back in Khotan, producers of the area's most famous products contemplate ways to get their goods to the market. At the Khotan Arts and Crafts Co., manager Jing Fengli said the firm would like to find new markets for Khotan's priceless white jade inside and outside of China.

"We would like to sell in Urumqi," she said, referring to the regional capital. "But it is far and collecting money is inconvenient."

3. LANGUAGE AND THE SEARCH FOR UZBEK NATIONAL IDENTITY

(Jennifer Balfour, Field Reports, Language And The Search For The Uzbek National Identity, *Central Asia and Caucasus Analyst*, September 27, 2000. Permission pending.)

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, a steady rise in nationalism has slowly relegated non-Uzbek speakers to the bottom of the educational pile. Every year passes with the threat of non-admission for those who refuse to learn Uzbek, the country's main language. Despite repeated warnings that their educational future is at stake, Russian language speakers steadfastly spurn pleas to master a tongue they have always considered inferior to theirs and that is part of their feudal past. Uzbek citizens are rapidly being re-educated in the face of a full-scale onslaught on their country's history. Old Soviet heroes are losing out to a fast-track re-instatement of previously side-lined politicians, writers, and warriors in an attempt to engender a nationalism lost under Communism.

University students, once submerged under shelves of Lenin's party speeches are now given President Karimov's treatises to memorize. In a last-ditch move to expunge the Soviet period from the minds and hearts of Uzbek closet patriots, university history papers include only one question out of a possible 850 about the 70 year period that created the Uzbek nation that is now blacking out that period's existence. The

remaining 849 questions concern a mix of revived champions of a long lost Uzbek past whose dates and achievements they fail to memorize at their peril. But Uzbek students have always been told what to believe and this is nothing new. For 70 years God was dead and their allegiance was to the Soviet motherland. With independence in 1991, God was rehabilitated together with everyone else the Soviets had destroyed and a new leader was sitting on Lenin's throne.

Rebellion, never top of an Uzbek student's agenda, has not been seriously attempted apart from a small skirmish in Tashkent in 1992. But Karimov read the warning signs enough then to ensure that the measly student grant is now paid on time and always ahead of teacher salaries. Nevertheless, student morale is at a low ebb and the nation's youth gaze hopelessly at a bleak future. "Who are we now?" they ask. "Once we were Communist and part of the greatest union on earth. We were told that Soviet soldiers never lost a battle and we were the luckiest children on earth. Now no one has heard of Uzbekistan and they invent a new hero every day."

Those who refuse to learn Uzbek are at the bottom of the pile, but they steadfastly maintain their intransigence in the hope that one day they will escape and get a coveted business opportunity abroad. For them the English language will be their passport out. In the meantime there is no let-up in the creation of the new Uzbek identity and language is but one facet of it. A 19th century Italian politician remarking on the creation of Italy was heard to say: "We have made Italy, now we must make Italians." The Russians made Uzbekistan, but they never made Uzbeks. The Uzbeks have a lot of catching up to do.

4. THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE

(Paul Globe, Central Asia: Analysis From Washington - The Politics of Language, *Radio Free Europe*, August 4, 2000. Copyright © 2000, RFE/RL, Inc. Reprinted with the permission of radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 1201 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington DC 20036 http://www.rferl.org)

Turkmenistan's decision to require all officials there to speak Turkmen and charges by ethnic Russians that such a requirement is discriminatory calls attention to one of the most difficult balancing acts he and the leaders of the four other Central Asian countries now face. This article articulates the problem of language policies, stipulating what effects the policies will have and who will be affected.

On the one hand, all of them feel compelled not only to build up the national identities of their own nation but also to meet the demands of their increasingly numerous educated young people for access to positions typically occupied by Russians or other Slavs in Soviet times.

But on the other hand, all of them are concerned that any assertion of the special rights of their titular nationality languages could drive out specialists they still need and might create problems in their relationship with the Russian government in Moscow. As a result, most have moved cautiously, now advancing in one direction and then moving off in quite another.

But Turkmen President Saparmurat Niyazov appears to have taken a step that may call that balance into question. At the end of July, he announced that officials and students who do not speak Turkmen will lose their positions, a move that follows his declaration last spring that he wanted to see "the complete and universal introduction" of the national language in public life.

To underscore his seriousness on this point at least for the time being, Niyazov ten days ago sharply criticized his foreign minister for the latter's weak knowledge of Turkmen and then abruptly fired him. And he has lashed out at other officials who speak Russian or some other language better than they do the national tongue.

Given Niyazov's willful and sometimes inexplicable actions, it remains unclear just why he acted as he did. But there are three compelling reasons why a Central Asian leader would seek to promote the language of the titular nationality, just as there are three compelling reasons why such a leader would likely be extremely cautious in doing so.

- First, in Central Asia perhaps more than anywhere else in the post-Soviet space, language is identity. Supporting the language of the dominant nationality thus helps to promote national identities and loyalty to the state. And in regimes which are anything but democratic, such national symbolism helps to build a bond between the leader and the indigenous population.

- Second, pushing out Russians and others who have occupied specialist positions in government and elsewhere since Soviet times may be popular among the titular nationality not only because it represents a form of nationalist expression but also because it opens jobs for increasingly well-educated Central Asians who might otherwise take part in opposition movements.

- And third, such an approach flows from a demographic revolution that has already taken place in Central Asia. Ethnic Russians have been leaving for more than a decade, and Central Asians continue to increase in number with each passing year. As a result, ethnic Russian communities are ever smaller components of the populations of these countries and hence have ever less political clout.

Between 1989 and 1998, the last year for which statistics are available, the percentage of ethnic Russians in the population of all these countries fell significantly: From 37 to 31 percent in Kazakhstan, from 21 to 14.6 percent in Kyrgyzstan, from 7.6 to 6 percent in Tajikistan, from 9.5 to 7 percent in Turkmenistan, and from 8.3 to 6.5 percent in Uzbekistan.

But as all of the Central Asian leaders are aware, there are three other reasons which point in the opposite direction.

- First of all, their regimes still need many of the ethnic Russian specialists who have skills that few Central Asians have acquired and that the Central Asian leaders themselves cannot do without. Indeed, many of the officers and security forces speak only Russian, even if they are members of the local nationality.

- Moreover, these leaders are all aware that such measures could have the effect of powering precisely the kind of populist and nationalist movements that they might not be able to contain, especially if the members of the titular nationality see such policies as giving them carte blanche to attack other groups.

- And finally, the Central Asian regimes are not insensitive to the fact that Russian human rights groups have attacked them for these linguistic policies, and they certainly fear that the Russian government may become critical as well.

So far and in sharp contrast to Russian policy regarding the Baltic countries, where Moscow has regularly criticized Estonia and Latvia for their language laws, the Russian government has been extremely restrained in its criticism of Central Asian countries on this score.

But that could quickly change, and if it does, Niyazov's incautious approach could entail far greater risks than he apparently expects.

5. EVERY MAN A KHAN

(John Pomfret, Mongolians Restore Their Good Names, *Washington Post Foreign Service*, July 11, 2000. © 2000, The Washington Post. Reprinted with permission.)

This article describes how Mongolians are reclaiming their heritage by restoring their last names that were banned by the Communists. Many Mongolians claim to be descendants of the great Mongol ruler Genghis Khan.

In 1981, Guragchaa took an eight-day ride on a Soviet spaceship and into the history books, becoming Mongoia's first and only cosmonaut. Earlier this year, the bearish-looking voyager had another rendezvous with destiny. He chose his family's last name. Gumgchaa, picked "Sansar," the Mongolian word for the cosmos.

"It made sense," said the 54-year-old military officer, dressed in starched combat fatigues and a pair of worn brown loafers, his uniform as the Mongolian air force chief of staff. "I tried to find my family's original name but I couldn't. I consulted on the cosmos choice with my family. My friends and colleagues also approved."

Mongolians have regained much since the fall of the communist tide here 10 years ago. Herders who had been forced to give up their animals to state-controlled trading companies got their herds back. Buddhist temples, shuttered for decades, have reopened. Seventy percent of the economy has been transferred to the private sector. But perhaps the most significant benefit to the 2.4 million people scattered across this vast, proud land six times the size of California just north of China has been this: Mongolians are reclaiming their names, and with them their history.

Mongolia's Communist rulers attacked the hereditary aristocracy in 1921, killing tens of thousands of princes and princesses. Four years later, as the revolution intensified, the Communists banned last names. The intention was for people to forget which class they belonged to, forget that the state killed their relatives, forget Mongolia's past.

Mongolia became a land in which most people not only had no personal property, but had no last name. Foreigners traveling here were told the use of only one name was a tradition; Mongolians themselves forgot that the tradition was new.

"People didn't even know 1921 happened. They didn't even know they had lost their names," said Serjee Zhambaldorjin, director of the State Central Library and an expert on modern Mongolian history, who like many other Mongolians and Russians, uses a second name based on his father's given name. "It was a way to eliminate the influence of the nobles and princes. This was a wiping out of nobility in Mongolia."

Over the last decade has come a cultural renaissance. Old heroes, once banned, are now feted. Tops among them is Genghis Khan, the great Mongolian leader whose empire spanned from China to Europe in the 13th century. For the first time in almost 400 years, Mongolia is neither a Chinese colony nor a Soviet satellite. It is independent and at least somewhat free to determine its own fate.

In 1991, Mongolia's then president, Punsalmaagiyn Ochirbat, broached the subject of last names, calling for legislation allowing families to reclaim them. In 1995, the Great Hural, or parliament, obliged by passing a law re-instituting last names. Starting late last year, Mongolia began issuing identity cards with last names.

The reason was three-fold, legislators argued. First, Mongolia deserved to reclaim its past. Second, a lack of names had triggered an epidemic of inbreeding in some regions. Under communist rule, Mongolians were barred from moving, and because nobody knew to whom they were related after 1921, the potential for inbreeding was high.

"We had big troubles with that in the 1970's," said Naranchimeg, director of a radio station in the southern Gobi Desert along the Chinese border. "People were marrying their relatives without knowing it. A few men were mating with different women. Now things are getting better because we are again allowed to know who our ancestors are."

A third reason was that many people in cities had the same name. In the capital, Ulan Bator, with a population of just 770,000, 10,000 women are named "golden flower." Four members of the outgoing parliament had the same name. This is rough on the phone company, which still organizes the phone book by first names.

Soon after the president's speech on names, Serjee, a bookish man with huge, black-framed eyeglasses, set to work amassing a genealogical encyclopedia of Mongolian tribal names, spending hours in his office on the second floor of the national library, which was built by Japanese prisoners of war held after World War II. Mongolians, he explained, began keeping records of family names as early as the 8th century.

Traditionally, last names were passed down orally, with each family member required to memorize seven generations of a clan's genealogical chart.

Some went further. For instance, the family tree of a descendant of Ghenghis Khan, Sholoi Khan, stretched back 350 years and contained 11,960 people. But after the revolution, many family trees were destroyed or forgotten, especially in the cities. Serjee estimates that as many as 60 percent of Mongolia's people, including cosmonaut Guragchaa, do not know their Liu names. Those in the countryside fare better, he said.

"Herders in the countryside know two things well," he said. "They have a keen eye for animals; they know which one belongs to whom. And they know people. Who was this son, and where he was born and what he did... Not like a lot of intellectuals who went to school and have problems with memory and eyesight."

Serjee's job was archaeology of sorts. He traveled to all of Mongolia's counties and provinces, checking local records and conferring with wizened elders. After seven years of work, he retrieved 1,260 last names. When he published a small pink booklet last year offering advice on choosing a last name, it sold out immediately.

Serjee said it took him a long time to discover his own family's name. His parents did not know. He traveled to his hometown and asked the elderly there. He finally found it: Besud.

Some popular names these days, Serjec said, are clan names – the eagle clan, the crow clan, the camel breeder clan, along with clan names for doctors, teachers and hunters. There is no clan name for lawyers.

But the big winner so far is Borjigin, the tribal name of Genghis Khan. It means "master of the blue wolf," a reference to Mongolia's creation myth in which a blue wolf mated with a fallow doer to give birth to the first Mongolian. Up to 80 percent of Mongolians so far are claiming that name, Serjee said.

Another prominent Mongolian who lost his family name is Enkhbayar, the head of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, which won a landslide victory in July 2 elections, taking 72 out of 76 seats in the Grand Hural. The party is the same organization that instituted the ban on last names, killed Mongolia's nobility and tried to suppress Mongolia's past. But it has changed drastically with the collapse of communism; it now touts free-market reform, democracy and a free press.

Enkhbayar, who lost relatives to the Communist purge, said renaming Mongolians is a good thing. This is a very important," he said, "even if we all want to be related to Genghis Khan."

6. THE YOUNGEST PLACE ON EARTH

(Erik Eckholn, The Youngest Place on Earth, *New York Times Magazine,* 29 November, 1998. Reprinted by permission.)

It is 11:30 PM, Wednesday night at the Bridge Club, a disco in the center of Ulaan Baatar. A well-heeled crowd of 20 and 30-year-olds dances to Puffy Combs rap version of "Every Breath You Take." Just about everyone is smartly dressed: the young women in tight jeans and turtlenecks, the men in well-tailored suits. Around midnight, the deejay makes an announcement, and everyone sits down. A bawdy rap song starts up, and a woman who cannot be older than 20 takes the stage and begins to take off her clothes. The audience watches in a manner best described as nonchalant.

Ten years ago, such a scene would have been unimaginable. Until democracy arrived in 1990, Mongolia was literally closed off to the world, isolated not only by tradition and geography but also by a strict, Soviet-dominated regime. With its ancient, nomadic shepherding culture and a Stalinist ethic rooted in the country's 1921 revolution, Mongolia was the land the 20th century forgot.

Mongolians seem to be making up for lost time. And the country's transition to democracy does have some special qualities to it, setting it apart from other ex-Soviet satellites. While most former Communist countries are moving from the 1940's to the modem age,

Mongolia is accelerating overnight from a way of life that dates back to Genghis Khan. More importantly, the Mongolian revolution is characterized by a stunning demographic youthfulness. Due to Communist efforts in the 1970's to expand a sparse population, a striking three-quarters of Mongolians are under the age of 35; more than half are younger than 21 (in the United States, by contrast, less than a third of the population is under 21). In part because of this boom, the new Mongolia, at least in its capital city, seems to be a democracy defined by everything Communism was not – free markets, lively media, political instability and sometimes a wild atmosphere reminiscent of Daytona Beach during spring break. Youth culture literally rules.

Back at the Bridge Club, the young woman finishes her act, completely nude. As she walks off the stage, most of the crowd heads back out onto the floor for a slow dance. In this city, which has swiftly created its own version of a Western-style night life, striptease has become old hat. In a competitive wave a couple of years ago, nearly all the city's dozens of clubs including some like the Top Ten Club that cater to high-school students suddenly started to offer strip acts.

When several young women are asked about the ubiquity of stripping, none say they actually find the acts enjoyable – but none say they would refuse to go to a bar because of them. Many observe that it is a way for women to earn better money at a time when jobs are scarce. Zaya, a 24-year-old editor at a radio station who describes herself as a feminist and who like many Mongolians uses only one name, notes that stripping "is better than being a prostitute," adding that "everyone is used to it by now."

What the young people who dominate Mongolia's only sizable city its Govermnent do not seem entirely used to is how to live with unfettered freedom. Not surprisingly, the youth revolution is experiencing growing pains. "Our society was sleeping for a long time," explains Delgermaa, a 39-year-old lawyer and one of the few female members of Parliament. "Everything was prohibited. Now, it's like we're just 8 years old."

To grasp what happened in Mongolia, think back to America in the late 1960's. In those days, the young baby boomers, who trusted no one over 30, wished their generation could just take over the Government and remake institutions according to young people's dreams. In Mongolia, something like that actually took place. In 1990, the 20-ish leaders of the country's baby boom forced the local Communists – whose Soviet sponsors were falling into disarray – to create a democracy. Charged with Western ideas about freedom and quoting heavily from laissez-faire economists like Milton Friedman, the bright-eyed youngsters formed political parties.

In the country's first real elections in 1992, a cautious public elected former Communists who had retooled themselves as "social democrats." But then in 1996, to their own surprise, the Democratic Coalition, which ran on a platform modeled on the Republican Party's 1994 Contract With America, won big and took over the country.

Today, members of that generation, many in their 30's and some still in their late 20's, run Government ministries and manage the country's traumatic shift from state-sponsored socialism to private enterprise. The average age for a Cabinet minister is just 36.

The country's main political divide – between the Democratic Coalition and the erstwhile Communists of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party – is to a large extent a generation gap as well. "The opposition members are mostly like our fathers," says Sanga Javyn Bayartsogt, the 32-year-old Minister of Nature and the Environment. "The younger people want to do things fast, without looking back."

One thing the youngsters have tried to do fast is to wipe out the economic legacy of Communism. Earlier in the decade, livestock herds and small state-owned companies were sold off, with the entire population receiving vouchers, which they could then use to purchase their own modest piece of the action. Since 1996, the process has accelerated: chicken farms, coal mines and trucking companies have all been auctioned off. Now the country is preparing to sell some of the largest state-run enterprises, including the national airline, to a combination of local and foreign investors. Following the advice of the United States and other Western countries that have poured more than

$500 million in aid into Mongolia, the country's young leaders have done away with price controls and abolished tariffs on imports.

The reforms have also brought about inflation, unemployment and the hardships that inevitably follow. The new leaders are the first to admit they were poorly prepared for such complex tasks. "Our democracy is very young and inexperienced," says Amarjargal, an economist who at 37 is the acting Foreign Minister. "We're learning every day. It's on-the-job training.".

Not everyone is happy with the learning curve. There is growing discontent among the well educated, many of whom, despite advanced degrees, find themselves underemployed or unemployed. There is also unhappiness among those who ventured to Ulaan Baatar from the Mongolian outback, where some 40 percent of the population, largely nomadic, remains. To walk around the city's sprawling and rough "*ger* districts" – a ger is the traditional tentlike home of canvas and thick felt – Is to sense the disappointment. Many of the city's young people cannot afford to go to discos or to drink at places like the Elvis Bar or the Boeing 777 in the modern part of town. A few low-rent bars and strip shows have opened in the ger districts, but many of the young men gather in dirt alleys to play cards and drink cheap beer and vodka. (At night, a police van drives about scooping up passed-out drunks to prevent them from freezing to death.) Street urchins haunt the city's steam tunnels. Young Mongolian women have flooded into China to work as prostitutes.

"Our people are not yet aware of all the dangers of extreme openness," says Hashbat Feulan, 37. A member of Parliament, she notes the connection between the strip shows and spreading prostitution on one side, and rising social ills like divorce and out-of-wedlock births on the other. In 1997, according to Government figures, in this country of just 2.3 million, 38,000 girls age 16 and under were unwed mothers. Sexually transmitted diseases are soaring, and AIDS has just started to appear.

In the last year, although the economy started to show some signs of life, things began to sour politically. Factionalism among the Democrats became more bitter and evidence appeared of corruption in high places. Perhaps this was inevitable in a country where newly minted leaders were inventing a democracy from scratch. No one, however, expected the tensions to lead to violence. But that appears to be what happened last month, when 36-year-old Sanjaasuren Zorig, a founder of the pro-democracy movement, was knifed to death by unidentified assailants only hours after it became clear that he would be named the country's next Prime Minister. Zorig was universally considered Mongolia's Mr. Clean, and the unsolved murder has left everyone asking which forces had the most to lose by his ascension – corrupt businessmen, crooked politicians or the newly emergent Russian mafia?

"We had naive ideas about each other, and generally about human beings," Hulan laments. To find their way through this strange new time, Mongolians have looked mostly toward the West, inhaling deeply. "We see American TV and movies," notes Delgermaa, the member of Parliament, "and we're trying to understand what's right and wrong in the rest of the world." Where the strongest cultural influences used to come from Russia, today the patron culture is that of the United States. MTV plays the same techno, hip-hop and heavy-metal music that attracts young people everywhere. Traditional Mongolian music remains popular, and some of Mongolia's aspiring bands like Hurd are weaving traditional folk themes into Western rock. But a typical stall selling tapes and CD's along Ulaan Baatar's streets features Nirvana, Metallica and Megadeth T-shirts.

Young Mongolians, attracted to everything that is not communist, also seem, increasingly, to be finding direction through religion. Before the Communists came to power, Mongolia was a Tibetan-style theocratic state. Today, despite the intense and violent efforts of the Communists to stamp it out, Buddhism is enjoying something of a revival. Not uncommon are pictures and posters of the Dalai Lama, who has visited the country four times. Ulaan Baatar's temples bustle with activity during morning prayers. Tens of thousands of Mongolians have also joined Christian churches, which engage in aggressive missionary work and even run a popular television channel.

Given Mongolia's seven decades of Communist rule, its imposed social isolation and its young

population, it is not surprising that the country has spent the 1990's on an occasionally reckless spree, sampling once-forbidden fruits ranging from X-rated entertainment to the excesses of the free market. In a few short years, it has experienced a truncated version of our own social, sexual and "values" revolution.

But it is hard not to feel optimistic about the country too. While Mongolia's young people have doubtless made the transition to democracy a particularly bumpy one, they have also infused the country with a vitality that may well insure its future progress. Mongolia is less corrupt than its ex-communist counterparts. Extremism plays little role in its politics, and there are few calls for a return to the old order. In a 1997 Freedom House study, Mongolia was the only post-communist country outside of Eastern Europe to be ranked as "free."

Flashing forward through history that took decades to sort out in the West, the Mongolians are learning in a heartbeat that the best and worst sides of the Western world are often entwined. They are learning, too, that the rewards of democracy and free markets are rarely immediate. "Not everyone can drive a Mercedes – some of us will always have to ride a horse," says Batjargal, 27, who lives with his wife and two kids in one of the ger districts. "While I am not too hopeful for myself, I am hopeful for our children's future."

7. THE CHANGING WORLD OF MONGOLIA'S NOMADS

(Melvyn C. Goldstein and Cynthia M. Beall, *The Changing World of Mongolia's Nomads.* Permission pending)

Shelter

We camped at Tsaganburgas for three wonderful weeks. The weather was sunny and mild, the nomads relaxed and leisurely. Both sides of the clear blue stream that bisected the steep mountain valley were dotted with bright white *ger* and a colorful mix of sheep, goats, yak and horses. Living there gave us our first insight into the simple but effective technology the nomads had developed over the centuries to cope with their harsh environment and to conduct their nomadic pastoralism.

Transportable shelters are essential to a pastoral nomadic way of life and, in the frigid cold of Mongolia, are a matter of survival, not just comfort. The Mongolian *ger*, as we happily found out by living in one, is superbly adapted to this. It is easy to put up, take down, and transport, and it is also very warm and windproof. Nomad families can break camp and load all their possessions onto camels in roughly an hour.

A modular structure is the key to its effectiveness. The "wall" consists of four or five wooden, collapsible accordion-like lattice fences resembling those Americans use to prevent children from falling down stairs. Spread open and lashed together, they form a sturdy circular wall about five feet high. When it is time to move on, each section collapses compactly into a flat unit about three feet wide that is easily loaded onto a camel.

The roof section is also readily portable since it consists of 40 to 50 detachable broomstick-like wooden poles about five to six feet long. One end of the pole fits into peg holes in the wooden "wheel" in the center of the roof that forms the opening for light and chimney pipes. The lower end is threaded with a rawhide thong that loops around a lattice crosspiece in the wall section. With these roof struts in place, the *ger* has a rigid self-supporting frame, although a large *ger* usually has an internal wooden pillar or two for additional stability. Most *ger* we saw were about 16 feet in diameter and 7½ feet high at the center.

Insulation and wind protection came from one or two layers of felt sections that are about 25 feet long and four to five feet wide. These are strapped into the wall lattice and the roof and topped by sheets of white canvas, tied tightly with straps that circle the *ger* like ribbons on a huge birthday gift. When the herders fire up their metal, yak-dung stoves, the temperature inside the *ger* becomes quite comfortable. We could sit five or six feet from the fire without a coat when the temperature outside was in the low teens. And after the fire died out at bedtime, the temperature inside the tent remained 15-20 degrees warmer than outside. But we could never forget the cold; when the outside evening temperature fell below 0 °F, the inside temperature dropped well

below 32 °F and froze our water and meat each night.

Because the nomads... live in a climate where there is only one growing season a year, they do not make long migrations to new pastures. The longest move we heard of took two days and was only 50 or 60 miles. Most were less, taking only a day. ...There is no advantage to moving hundreds of miles because the district comprises 10,100 square miles of twisting mountains and valleys, 99.9% of which is pasture land used by 115,000 head of livestock and about 4,000 people. Ranging from 7,800 to 11,000 feet above sea level, it is a stark landscape without trees or even shrubs. To an outsider it can seem devoid of habitation, but in reality the mountains and valleys contain scores of named campsites – neighborhoods – each occupied at a particular time of year, usually by the same households.

Hospitality

Halter is a 44 year-old herder whose household included his wife Badam, his wife's widowed mother Otgon, and five children. We were seated on the tiny foot-high stools called *sandl* that look like kindergarten furniture and are found in the guest section of every *ger* – the left side away from the door. Haltar began by taking an elegant agate snuff bottle from its bright silk brocade pouch; he offered it to each of us in turn as tradition dictates. Fortunately, we didn't have to inhale the snuff – loosening the bright coral stopper and sniffing near the opening is acceptable.

Badan, meanwhile, set out the "hospitality bowl" each household prepares for guests, and then went about making Mongolian milk-tea for us. Mongolians use a type of compressed tea leaf that is called "brick" tea in English because it is rock solid and roughly the shape of a brick. It is made in China and Russia from the poorest quality tea by wetting the leaves and pressing them into a mold. These tea bricks eliminate bulk and are convenient to transport and store. They are used throughout Mongolia and Tibet.

Preparing tea requires first chipping off tea leaves with a knife or hammer. After these leaves are boiled in water, milk, butter, and salt are gradually added and blended. The resulting beverage, called milk-tea, is white and tasty, though strangely neither like milk or tea. Mongolian nomads keep a warm pot of tea handy and drink bowlfuls throughout the day.

The hospitality bowl was piled high with all sorts of goodies – thick chunks of homemade cheeses, sugar cubes imported from the U.S.S.R., chocolate-covered candies from Ulan Batar, and the staple grain food – *bordzig*. This is a soft pastry made from a rolled out wheat dough that is deep-fried in lard or cooking oil. The nomads make hundreds of these at one time and eat them for early morning and midday meals together with milk-tea, meat, cheese, and other dairy products. In the evening, they have a cooked meal, usually a stew.

Haltar had just slaughtered a sheep, so he also set out a big metal basin filled with freshly boiled lungs, heart, stomach, intestines, liver, and the Mongol's favorite delicacy – pieces of solid fat. Mongolians, we quickly learned, love meat and fat, and in fact consider meat without fat unappetizing and inadequate. Once, when we were trying to buy meat in town, a young man we knew brought us a leg of mutton but refused payment because he said the meat wasn't good quality. It was lean, and taking money would be like cheating us.

The Hair Cutting Ritual

A major ritual event is the "hair-cutting" ceremony where we experienced Mongolian hospitality on a large scale.

Hair cutting is a traditional nomad rite that has survived socialism. It marks the point at which a child is considered to have survived the dangers of infancy – at either three or five years of age. Before this, parents do not cut their child's hair. As a consequence, we had a difficult time telling little boys and girls apart because both sported pigtails tied with bright, fluffy bows.

The hair cutting rite normally takes place in the fall when the nomads are camped close to each other and the peak work period of summer milking and butter-making is over. Parents invite scores of relatives,

neighbors and friends, and their *ger* is jam-packed. Outside the scene resembles a suburban party in the U.S., except that instead of shiny parked cars, dozens of elegant horses are tethered alongside a few colorful Czech and Russian motorcycles.

At the parties we attended, women were seated on the right side of the *ger* and males on the left, with the elderly of each sex sitting at the far end of their row in the back. The elderly men set on a bed-couch at the back of the *ger*. Brightly painted wooden tables about two feet high were set up in a rectangle around the stove in the center of the *ger*. They were laden with a half dozen big metal hospitality bowls overflowing with food. The tent was full of gifts for the child who was having his (or her) hair cut – bricks of tea, boxes of sugar cubes, packets of biscuits, boots, money and toys.

As each guest arrived, the hosts served him/her a bowl of yogurt, a sip of a unique vodka locally distilled from milk (called *nirmalike*), and then tea. This was followed by the endless succession of meat, noodle soup, *borzig*, and cheeses. The hair-cutting ceremony was a festive time that lasted all day. Guests talked and laughed, and spontaneous bursts of song filled the *ger* with haunting Mongolian folk melodies.

Full-scale nomad hospitality, whether at a celebration or just visiting someone's *ger*, involves serving milk-vodka and/or regular vodka. These are offered to each person in tiny porcelain shot glasses or small plastic bowls. The guest accepts the cup with the right hand outstretched and the left hand held under the elbow of the right, takes a sip, and passes it back to the server using the same gesture. The server tops it off and offers it to the next person.

Cutting the hair of the child-of-honor involves all the guests. The child, or in one instance, twins, moved from guest to guest carrying a scissors and small bag. Each guest took the child into his or her lap and snipped a small lock of hair with the scissors, stuffing the hair in the bag. The children we saw were extraordinarily well behaved about all this. "Hair-cutting" is a major event for a household, so the best food is served. Several of the household's fattest sheep are slaughtered, and the guests are served lots of meat.

8. INNER MONGOLIANS MARK 53 YEARS OF OCCUPATION

(*Inner Mongolians Mark 53 Years of Occupation*, from www.innermongolia.org/english. November 2000. Reprinted by permission of the Inner Mongolian People's Party)

Members and supporters of the Inner Mongolian People's Party (IMPP) have marked the 53 years of Chinese Communist Government's occupation of inner Mongolia on April 29, 2000 by staging a protest demonstration in front of the Chinese Embassy in Washington DC. Later the group moved to the park across the White House for a brief demonstration. The Demonstration lasted over 2 hours and the demonstrators shouted slogans, distributed flyers and sang Mongolian songs.

Inner Mongolia, historically part of the great Mongol Empire founded by Genghis Khan, was occupied by the Chinese Communist Government in late 1940's and on May, 01, 1947, the Chinese Communist government created the so-called Inner Mongolian Autonomous region.

9. THE REBIRTH OF KYRGYZSTAN

(Ewa Wasilewska, Manas at 1000: The Rebirth of Kyrgyzstan, in *Aramco World* May/June 1996. Reprinted by permission.)

How do the Kygyz see their history?

The 4.5 million people of Kyrgyzstan live in the crisp-air valleys and on the high steppes of the western ranges of the Tien Shan, the "Heavenly Mountains." They were spared the worst of the ecological devastation that the drive to establish heavy industry in the former Soviet Union brought to other areas, but they face considerable economic problems – many of them related to the painful uncoupling of their new national economy from that of Russia. But Kyrgyzstan has preserved its unique spirit and the ideal of its past, and now it is earnestly going about the creation – or re-creation – of the democratic, multi-ethnic Kyrgyz state that is a central feature of one of the world's greatest pieces of oral literature, *The Epic of Manas*.

Communist ideology abhorred nationalism as

a divisive force, and the Soviet government did its best to expunge ethnic traditions and native languages from schools and public life throughout the USSR. In Kyrgystan, especially in the 1930's, 40's, and 50's, most of *The Epic of Manas* was eliminated from school curricula, and certain "official" parts of it were reinterpreted to undermine Kyrgyz nationalism: Manas' unification of diverse tribes was compared to the unification of different nations under communism, for example. References to Manas, or to the epic itself, as symbols of the Kyrgyz nation were forbidden. Several times in those decades, Kyrgyz authorities proposed a celebration in honor of Manas; each time the Soviets turned down the "nationalistic" request.

Throughout the Soviet period, each Kyrgyz considered it a matter of national responsibility to tell the Manas story to his or her children, and the epic survived that era just as it survived the Mongol invasion of the 12th to 14th centuries. *The Epic of Manas* seems to be the only epic to have survived for as long as a millennium in oral form before its first significant fragments were put down on paper, in the 19th century.

To the people of Kyrgyzstan and those of Turkic origin throughout Eurasia, *The Epic of Manas* represents a revered narrative of a people that, in spite of hardships, survived, preserved its identity and unified in the name of a great leader. For the majority Muslims of Kyrgyzstan, the epic's link to the heart may be the knowledge that Manas was born into their faith, and that it was through him that Islam was disseminated. For women, it may be the epic's depiction of the wise, brave and independent women of the steppe, such as Kanikey, the hero's best-loved wife. For others, Manas is a symbol of love of the land, of freedom, national independence and interethnic unity. Finally, for others, Manas is a symbol of love of the land, of freedom, national independence and interethnic unity. Finally, for scholars and lovers of world literature, *The Epic of Manas* is a unique "encyclopedia of the steppe," filled with the customs, traditions, facts and dreams of a region whose claim to historical attention has long been overshadowed by the Chinese and Mediterranean civilizations that it bridged.

How was history transmitted?

Although its historicity may be disputed, *The Epic of Manas* is a cultural treasure, and we owe its preservation primarily to generations of tellers of the tale, the *manaschis*. The first of them was one of the 40 companions of Manas, a warrior named Yrchy, who mourned the death of his hero in songs of lamentation. These songs were sung by various Kyrgyz singers until the 15th century, when a legendary singer named Toktogul collected many of them into the first of the numerous versions of *The Epic of Manas* which exist today. The Kyrgyz believe that the content of the epic was expanded in the 18th century by yet another legendary figure, Nouruz. Many other *manaschis* contributed to the creative process, each in his own time, and their names have been preserved in association with the various versions of the tale.

A master *manaschi,* however, is more than a reciter of memorized verse. He or she is expected to follow the main plot and retain the epic's literary forms but, beyond that, is free to embellish. Thus a good *manaschi* adds details, explains phenomena in the story and responds to listeners' comments – much as do other tellers of traditional oral epics in the Middle East and Turkic lands.

As a *chala*, or apprentice, a student *manaschi* observes his mentor, memorizes passages that are the mentor's specialties, and tries to mimic his expressions and styles of relating particularly spectacular episodes. The *chala* may then perform from memory, though without much creative interpretation. Young performers at this level contribute a great deal to the popularization of the epic. More respected, however, are the *chinigi* or master *manaschis*. It is they who draw crowds for performances that bring out their beginning-to-end knowledge of the epic, and that offer individual interpretations. The highest class of Manas narrators is the *chon manaschi*, the great artist-storyteller, the one who creates new versions of many events in the epic while still reciting and singing an enormous number of lines from numerous traditional renditions. The time, dedication, work and understanding required to become a chon *manaschi* are willingly undertaken, for the work

is a spiritual calling. One modern *manaschi*, Seydena Moldoke Kizi, says she was called to the profession in a dream; she eventually left her village to travel to the places made famous by Manas to "feel" them. Wherever they go, *manaschis* are met with the utmost respect and love as living repositories of the memory of Kyrgyzstan.

10. KOREANS: A SUBMERGED IDENTITY OF CENTRAL ASIA

(Lucian Kim, At World Crossroads in Central Asia, Identity is Submerged: For Uighurs, Koreans, Kazaks, and others, ethnicity comes second to making ends meet, special in *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 6, 1998. Reprinted by permission of the author.)

Kim Pen Hva, Uzbekistan

On a Saturday night on a collective farm in eastern Uzbekistan, the village disco booms the latest Western dance tracks into the still night air. Several streets away, a Uighur Muslim family and friends celebrate the ritual circumcision of three young boys. Whether by force or volition, different peoples and cultures have been intermingling for centuries here at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. And at Kim Pen Hva, named for the ethnic Korean who ran this kolkhoz, or collective farm, during Communist times, decades of Soviet social engineering have produced a surprising cosmopolitanism for such a seeming backwater.

The reality of life makes ethnic identity secondary to the main task of getting by. The average monthly wage on the cotton farm is less than $20, and many villagers look back wistfully to the days before the collapse of the Soviet Union, when founder Chairman Kim made the kolkhoz rich and famous, by Soviet standards. Yet despite the homogenization and relative racial harmony, Central Asia's ethnic groups still cling to their identities, however tenuously. Of the village's 9,000 inhabitants, only about 50 percent are ethnic Uzbeks, with Koreans, Kazakhs, Uighurs, and Russians making up the other half. They live side by side in low, one-story houses hidden from the main road by high, overgrown fences. Korean teenagers, chatting in Russian, assemble outside the disco while, on the other side of the village, Uighurs and Uzbeks dance to traditional tunes. But there is no segregation here, and the village's ethnic groups mix easily.

"We have never had any conflicts," says Ella Kim, a kindergarten teacher who during the summer sells vegetable at the sparse kolkhoz bazaar. "We all live peacefully together, work together, drink tea together," she says. An ethnic Korean, Ms. Kim married an Uzbek. "At first, my parents were against the marriage," she says. "But then they got used to him. They understand that the most important thing was not his nationality, but his personality." Surprisingly, Kim concedes that if her own two children had wanted to marry Uzbeks, she would have been opposed.

Forced migration

Ethnic Koreans are especially rootless here, speaking Russian as their first language and giving their children Russian names. Fearing that ethnic Koreans in the Soviet Far East would collaborate with the Japanese, Joseph Stalin had more than 70,000 moved to Central Asia in 1937. More than a dozen other ethnic groups received similar treatment from the suspicious Soviet leader. Today some 230,000 descendants of the Korean exiles live in Uzbekistan, which has the largest Korean minority of any country in the former Soviet Union.

"Daewoo-stan"

The ethnic ties have had a benefit: in the past five years, South Korea has become Uzbekistan's biggest foreign investor, pouring more than $1 billion into the country. Some businesspeople jokingly refer to it as "Daewoo-Stan," after the South Korean conglomerate. The legacy of the multiethnic USSR has left now-independent Uzbekistan with an easygoing tolerance.

Even at the Kim Pen Hva kolkhoz, it appears that most villagers are at least bilingual. "I know three languages: Uzbek, Uighur, and Russian," says Abdushkur Kasimov, an ethnic Uighur boy living on the farm. "And in school we're starting to learn German."

While the signs around the kolkhoz are all written in Uzbek, Russian remains the lingua franca of the community, as it does throughout most of Central Asia. In the kolkhoz's main office, it's a matter of practicality, since the manager is Uzbek, his assistant Uighur, and the head account Korean. "We're all one family," says one office worker, a Kazak.

Few mixed Marriages

Although the inhabitants of the kolkhoz seem genuinely to disregard ethnic differences, there are few mixed marriages. "It's rare, that's true," says Shakura Yakubova, the Uighur assistant to the manager. "Religion is the main reason." Uighures, Uzbeks, and Kazaks tend to be Muslim, Koreans are usually Buddhist or Christian, and Russians Orthodox Christian.

Yet Ms. Yakubuva, who is unmarried, says ethnicity would not play a role should the time come for her to wed. "The most important thing is that he love me," she says. "But, still, the majority of people don't think that way."

Muyassar Yudasheva, her Uzbek secretary, agrees. "For my parents, it's important that I marry an Uzbek. But nowadays, they can't go against our will." Akmal Atamkulov, an ethnic Kazak farmer of the *kolkhoz*, sees a connection between the USSR's ethnic diversity and an easier life. "Before, when we had the Soveit Union, all the republics were together," he says clasping his hands. "Now they're all on their own. Until recently, we lived like brothers – of course it was better to live together like that," he says.

11. ETHNIC REAWAKENING IN WESTERN CHINA

(Dorian, James P., Brett Wigdortz and Dru Gladney. Central Asia and Xinjiang, China: Emerging Energy, Economic and Ethnic Relations" In *Central Asian Survey;* 1997, pp. 466-467, 479-481. Permission pending)

After the break-up of the former Soviet Union in 1991, the Chinese government was rightly concerned that the new independence of the bordering Central Asian republics along national lines might prompt similar goals of separatism. Beijing was also faced with the problem of encouraging economic development and linkages without assisting ethnic separatism. Ethnic tensions have indeed increased in Xinjiang during the 1980's and post Cold War period, worrying Chinese government officials. The Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and other Turkic groups in the region are closer culturally and linguistically to their Central Asian neighbors than they are to the Han Chinese, who are regarded as recent immigrants to Eastern Turkestan. Violent incidents have been increasing in recent years, with frequent reports of isolated bombings: a bus in Urumqi, a government office in Kashgar, and a bridge in southern Xinjiang.

Ethnic Impacts

Inter-ethnic relations in Xinjiang and cross-border ethnic ties have tremendous consequences for development in the region. Not only has the area experienced large cross-border transfers in the past due to political shifts, such as the relocation of nearly 100,000 Kazakhs and Uyghurs from Xinjiang in 1962 to Central Asia following the Sino-Soviet split, but the migration of Russians into Central Asia and Han into Xinjiang continues to put pressure on local populations. Civil war plagued the region throughout the first half of this century, with conflicts waged generally across ethnic and religious lines, leading to severe economic and social depravations, not unlike the Bosnian and Chechnyan conflicts.

Economic aspects of ethnic relations in Xinjiang and Central Asia include the following:

- Ethnic ties have led to a surge in cross-border trade, with relaxed visa and travel restrictions for those with family relations.
- Past ethnic conflicts and a long history of inter-ethnic rivalries have disrupted economic development, requiring heavy investment in security and peace-keeping forces in the region.
- Majority/minority population shifts have led to

increased political and financial commitments to urban development and resource re-allocation.

- Some minority groups in Xinjiang and Central Asia may ultimately expect a greater share of revenues from local industrial production, including that of oil and gas, as has occurred in Russia.

- Russian and Han Chinese migrants to the region continue to display a higher standard of living, with greater professional and education opportunities, exacerbating inter-ethnic rivalry and resentment.

- Affirmative action policies for underprivileged minorities have led to resentment on the part of majority and unaffected populations.

12. OASIS IDENTITIES: THE UYGHURS

(From *Oasis Identities: Uighur Nationalism Along China's Silk Road* by Justin Jon Rudelson, © 1997 Columbia University Press. Reprinted by permission of the Publisher.)

Who are the Uighurs?

Scholars trace their ethnic origin to the Uyghur Empire (744-840 C.E.) located in northwestern Mongolia. This term refers to a Turkic, steppe, nomadic, shamanistic and Manichaean society. From 844 to 932 it became the name for a sedentary, oasis, Buddhist, Manichaean and Nestorian Christian society centered in Turpan. Finally, from 932 to 1450, the term denotes an elite, primarily Buddhist, Turkic society centered in the Turpan oasis who differed from the Islamic Turks living to the west.

The term was then not used for 500 years until 1931 when the Chinese attempted to define some hereditary leadership which resulted in ethnic turmoil. The Chinese put down the revolt but that set the stage for the revitalization of Uyghur identity. The Chinese then defined the oasis dwellers of Xinjiang as Uyghurs. The label Uyghur recognized a common culture that was already in place and also allowed for multiple relationships: the Turkic Muslim oasis dwellers were defined as Uyghurs, while the other significant ethnic groups were defined as Kazaks, Tungans and Hans. This was acceptable to the Uyghurs because it excluded all groups that were not culturally and linguistically similar to them. An important aspect of this new Uyghur ethnic identity was that it allowed the oasis dwellers to compete with the others as a nationality. In fact, the Uyghurs became the largest of the nationalities in Xinjiang. Uyghur identity had previously been associated with Buddhism and never with Islam. Most of the Uyghurs now live in the Tarim Basin of Xinjiang - one of the most desolate and remote places in the world. The oases populated by the Uyghurs lie primarily in the south of Xinjiang - six cities with the two well-known ones of Khotan and Kashgar.

Religion

The history of Islam in Xinjiang has not been harmonious. Violent raids and warfare by two rival Sufi sects wrecked havoc in Xinjiang from the 17th to the 20th centuries. When the region came under Communist control, the party's political and economic administrative structure excluded Islamic clerics, weakening their power and prestige. Since the religious reforms of 1978, mosques have been rebuilt and new ones constructed at a rapid rate. These policies have fostered positive sentiments toward the Chinese government among the Turpan Uyghurs. But the Uyghurs in Kashgar have continued to hold anti-Chinese sentiments, partially because Kashgar has not experienced the same level of economic growth as Turpan. In general, Islamic life in the south is more conservative, as evidenced by the women of Kashgar who are totally veiled while the women in Turpan often wear only head scarves. By following Islam, Uyghurs reject the atheism of Chinese Communism. In Kashgar, to call oneself a Uyghur is also to accept Islam. Muslim rituals influence all realms of Uyghur life from male circumcision (which often takes place at the age of seven), to Ramadan, to a *hajj* to Mecca.

Language

Although the two main languages spoken in Xinjiang, Uyghur and Mandarin, are unrelated, they have affected each other, and this has contributed to good relations in the oasis. The Uyghur language has changed the Mandarin dialect spoken by the Hans and the Turgans. Most Uyghurs in Turpan are bilingual. In many situations, Uyghurs and Hans address each other in their respective languages and are able to communicate.

Local Identities

One of the interesting aspects of study about Xinjiang is the strong local oasis identities which have developed. Geographic isolation has resulted in oases developing their internal culture based on unique ways of celebrating different occasions and rituals within Uyghur culture and Islamic and folk religion practice. For example, in Turpan there is a resurgence and strengthening of Islam resulting in an increase in the power of the religious clerics. Islamic education in Turpan has increased and so has the prestige of the local *mollas*. A large factor influencing the growth of Islamic education is the cost of secular education. Students throughout Xinjiang who attend secular colleges have to pay tuition and many Uyghur peasants do not consider secular education a viable option for their children.

Folk Religious Practice

Folk practices permeate most Uyghur rituals, except orthodox Islamic rituals. They deal mainly with warding off *jin* (evil spirits). In some villages it is common to see pouches wrapped in colored threads hanging from branches to ward off the *jin*. Fire can be used to ward off *jin*, in childhood rites, wedding ceremonies and cemeteries.

The incorporation of folk religious practices in Uyghur life transition ceremonies is seen clearly during birth and death rituals. Women give birth to their first child in their parents' home and when the child is born a small piece of red cloth is placed on the doorpost to announce the birth. The new mother is not allowed visitors for forty days. The parents bury the afterbirth at adult eye-level in a mud wall of the house but never tell the child where.

Infant morality is fairly high in Xinjiang. A child is buried according to Islamic tradition and the child is named three days after birth when the parents believe the child will survive. Medicine is often Western because it is fast-acting except for long term illnesses which are treated with a combination of Greco-Indian, Chinese and Western traditions. When a person dies, the community is informed in a subdued manner. The attendant from the mosque comes and washes the body and then wraps it in a white sheet. Burial is the day following death. Men dress in black for the funeral and wrap white sashes around their waists and wrap their caps with white turbans. Women wear white veils. After returning from the grace, the deceased's family holds a family funeral ceremony in their home. Close family members remain in mourning for one year.

Marriage Rituals

Marriages between Uyghurs and Tungars are rare; marriages between Hans and Uyghurs are almost unheard of. Children of mixed Uyghur and Han parentage are stigmatized; they are not allowed to attend Uyghur funerals, have difficulty finding marriage partners and are mistrusted throughout their lives. In the countryside, marriage can take place when the men and women are as young as fifteen. Young people often meet at cinemas and weddings or marriages are arranged in the countryside. If it is an arranged marriage, during the second meeting the parents agree on the match and the man's parents bring food and clothing to the woman's family. At the final stage of the engagement (2 or 3 weeks before the wedding), the groom's family brings food required for the wedding feast, as well as clothing and betrothal gifts. At the wedding the bride's family gives them household items.

The wedding ceremony is a joyous celebration involving the entire community. A week or two prior to the wedding ceremony invitations are sent out on red paper. On the evening before the wedding, the bride's

and groom's families serve their guests a feast. Men and women are segregated. The men drink *haraq*, a strong alcoholic beverage and smoke. By midnight, the musicians begin to beat the drums outside the house and male and female guests begin to dance. At traditional weddings, Uyghurs dance only with members of their own sex. The musicians play traditional Central Asian instruments – the *sunay* (reed oboe-like instrument), *naghra* (drums covered in cowhide beaten with foot-long poplar sticks.) Only male family representatives are present at the religious wedding ceremony. No guests are invited.

Social Group Identity

In May, 1989, the government mandated that rural minorities limit their families to three children and urban minorities to two. Uyghurs prefer families that include as many sons as possible and at least two daughters. Females attempt to remain at their birth village, often marrying men from the same village and marriage between two sisters from one family and two brothers from another family is not uncommon. Fathers prefer two daughters because it provides each with a confidant and alleviates their fear that a single daughter would grow up too masculine and end up interfering in family affairs. The most important relationship is that with two daughters, a special relationship will be established between the husbands of the sisters and the two families can cooperate economically. This cooperative work sharing pattern has created wealth among some families when they converted their fields to grape cultivation (the most valuable commodity is the golden seedless raisin, produced only in Turpan). Most of the wealth was converted into brick houses, Most of the merchants from Turpan have developed extensive trading contacts with Hans and Turgans (Huis) in China proper and are involved in the long-distance raisin trade with China.

Today most Uyghur intellectuals live in the capital, Urumchi, a modern city that is 85% Han. They are mainly employed at Chinese government institutions staffed by Hans. They are constantly faced with their Uyghurness in the face of the Han Chinese culture of the capital and the choices they are forced to make deal with issues of assimilation or possible career advancement. Intellectuals make historical events and individuals powerful and politically significant. And can lead to political activism among the Uyghurs.

Peasants, merchants and intellectuals are all mixed within the villages of the Xinjiang Oases. However, their loyalties and identification is largely based on income and location: peasants who are poor and stay within the region identify with Islam; merchants who trade in China identify with the Chinese state; intellectuals tend to be pan-Turkic nationalists and identify with the larger Turkic world of western Central Asia and Turkey that lies to the west of Xinjiang with strong secular and anti-Islamic sentiments.

The Future of the Uyghur Past

There are strong differences in the oases about the issue of Uyghur identity. Peasants feel a strong alignment to Islam; merchants have accepted a pan-PRC Chinese identity; intellectuals believe that science and Western education are the means which will bring progress to the Uyghurs. Intellectuals fear the resurgence of Islam will place Uyghurs in a position similar to that of native Americans in the United States. Instead, this group wishes to see the Uyghurs forge an identity which will allow them to live within the Chinese state. Oases rivalries and particular world views were strengthened by the opening of borders (after the fall of the former Soviet Union) and the development of tourism and trade. Intellectuals seize on these world views to create nationalist ideologies that influence local notions of Uyghur identity. Some of the strategies of these intellectuals include:

(a) develop a "portrait" of an historical Uyghur leader which can be used as a reference point for peasant nationalism;

(b) produce a volume of poetry attributed to the "National Hero." In this case it is Abdurusal Ömär. His most famous poem is a call to action and uses the word "Uyghur," a term most young people had not heard until 1985, but today there is a strong popular awareness:

Awaken!
Hey! Uyghur, it is time to waken,
You haven't any possessions,
You have nothing to fear.
If you don't rescue yourself
From this death,
Your situation will become very grave.
Stand up! I say,
Raise your heads and wipe your eyes!
Cut the heads off of your enemies,
Let the blood flow!
If you don't open your eyes and look around you,
You'll die pitifully, helplessly.
Your body appears lifeless,
And yet you don't worry about dying.
I call out to you but you do not react,
It seems as though you want to die unconsciously.
Open your eyes wide and look about you.
You must contemplate the future,
Think about it a long time.
If this opportunity should fall from your grasp,
The future will bode much hardship, much hardship.
My heart breaks for you my Uyghur people,
My brothers in arms, relatives, my family.
I worry for your lives,
So I am calling you to awaken.
Have you not heard me yet?
What has happened to you?
There will be a day when you will regret,
And on that day you will understand,
Just what I have been telling you.
"Damn!" you will say when you realize
That you have missed your only chance,
And on that day you will know that
I, Uyghur, was right.

The struggle over history now being waged in Xinjiang between Uyghur intellectuals and the Chinese state is filled with both opportunities and dangers. China and the Islamic world meet in Central Asia; Xinjiang has now become the "pivot of Asia." Ethnic barriers and profound interethnic disputes pervade Central Asian countries. Economic development is a key to stability in China and Xinjiang as in Central Asia. The continued relocation of Hans to Xinjiang can prove to be politically dangerous. As recently as 1997, protests in *Ili* resulted in the death and wounding of many Uyghur students, as well as other terrorist actions. Many Uyghurs call for separation from China while others call for the revitalization of their people through the Chinese government.

13. RUMBLINGS FROM THE UYGHURS

(Dru Gladney, Rumblings from the Uyhgurs, in *Current History*, September 1997, pp. 287-290. Reprinted with Permission from *Current History*, © 1997, Current History, Inc.)

The Communist government's establishment of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on October 1, 1955, perpetuated the Nationalist policy of recognizing the Uyghur as a minority nationality under Chinese rule. This nationality designation, however, masks tremendous regional and linguistic diversity and includes groups such as the Loplyk and Dolans that had little historical connection with the oasis-based Turkic Muslims that became known as the Uyghur separatists.

Uyghur separatist organizations based in Istanbul, Ankara, Almaty, Munich, Amsterdam, Melbourne, and Washington, D.C. may differ on their political goals and strategies, but they all share a common vision of a unilineal Uyghur claim on the Xinjiang region that was disrupted by Chinese and Soviet intervention. The winning of independence by the former Soviet Central Asian republics in 1991 has encouraged these Uyghur organizations in their hopes for an independent Turkestan, although the new, mainly Muslim Central Asian governments all signed protocols with China in the spring of 1996 that they would neither harbor nor support separatist groups.

Though many portray the Uyghur as united around separatist or Islamist causes, they continue to be divided by religious conflicts (Sufi and non-Sufi factions), territorial loyalties, linguistic discrepancies, commoner-elite alienation, and competing political loyalties. These divided loyalties were evident in an attack in May 1996 on the Imam of the Idgah Mosque in Kashgar by Uyghur, as well as the assassination of at least six Uyghur officials last September. It is also important to note that Islam has been only one of several unifying markers for Uyghur identity, depending on whom they are cooperating with. For example, the Uyghur distinguish themselves from the Hui Muslim Chinese (who share the Uyghur belief in Sunni Islam) by saying they are the legitimate autochthonous minority. To contrast

themselves with the nomadic Muslim peoples, such as the Kazak or Kyrgyz, the Uyghur might stress their attachment to the land and oasis of origin. In opposition to the Han Chinese, the Uyghur will generally emphasize their long history in Xinjiang. This suggests that Islamic fundamentalist groups such as the Taliban in Afghanistan will have only limited appeal among the Uyghur. Moreover, this contested understanding of history will continue to influence much of the current debate over separatist and Chinese claims to the region.

Ten Moslem Separatists Executed in Xinjiang, in Inside China Today, May 19, 1999. Permission Pending

Ten Moslem separatists have been executed in the Xinjiang autonomous region in NW China, local media reports received here Wednesday said. The 10, apparently all of ethnic Uighurs, the dominant ethnic group in Xinjiang, were executed on May 12. The report did not state where the executions had taken place nor which court had handed down the sentences.

The convicts were found guilty of "criminal activities attempting to split the country", including murder, pillaging and the trafficking of arms and ammunition among a total of eight criminal offenses. Abdelrahmane Kaim, Abdelaziz Karim, Wafar Sait and Wamar Kurban were named in the report as the key "agitators." Wamar Kurban was also signaled out as being responsible for a bomb attack.

Xinjiang, with a population of more than 17 million, is gripped by tension between the region's Uighur Moslem majority and Han Chinese settlers, who make up 38% of the population. Several violent clashes in past months have led to government crackdowns and a series of death penalties for those involved in activities aimed at undermining the Chinese authorities.

China Executes Four Uighur Separatists, in Inside China Today, May 20, 1999. Permission Pending.

A Chinese court has executed four minority Uighurs for separatist terrorism in the restive Moslem province of Xinjiang in China's far northwest, a local newspaper reported today.

The Xinjiang Daily, in an edition available in Beijing on Thursday, said the Urumqi Intermediate Court ordered the execution of 10 people in eight separate cases on May 12. Three of them were Uighurs executed as leaders of separatist guerilla groups convicted of murder, armed robbery and arms-selling, it said. Another Uighur was executed for separatism, bombing and murder, the newspaper said. Five other Uighur and two ethnic Chinese were executed for crimes including murder and rape, the newspaper said. It gave no further details.

Amnesty International recently accused China of human rights violations in Xinjiang, saying it had recorded 210 death sentences and 190 executions in the region since 1997, mostly of Uighurs convicted of subversion and terrorism. Xinjiang is home to Turkish-speaking Uighurs. Militants have been struggling for decades to establish an independent East Turkestan in the province, which borders three former Soviet Central Asian republics.

The region has been rocked by anti-Chinese riots, bombs and assassinations since 1966.

14. "ALL *HUI* UNDER HEAVEN ARE ONE FAMILY"

(From *Muslim Chinese, Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic,* by Dru Gladney, Harvard University Press 1996, pp.7, 21-36, 96-98, 171-173, 195-200, 321-328. Permission pending.)

There is much confusion in the literature on minority nationality identity in China over the interchangeability of the terms ethnicity and nationality. Nationality is what the state in China has conferred upon the 56 nationalities who were indemnified mainly in the 1950's and expressed in the Chinese term for nationality, minzu. *Ethnicity, for which there is no separate term in Chinese, is something entirely different, but not unrelated, in that it is tied into one's own self-perceived identity, which is often influenced by the state policy. Many peripheral peoples have always been concerned about their identity in the Mandarin speaking China and have been discriminated as a minority. One of such groups are the Hui - Muslim believers, yet distinguished from other Muslims of China.*

The Hui are different from other peoples who have always lived on the ancient soil of China (like the Han - the majority ethnic group in China); they are not

immigrants that came to China from abroad (like the Koreans); nor are they the people of a border region who have long lived in contact with the Chinese (like the Kazakhs and the Dai). Rather, the Hui relied upon the tremendous unifying power of Islamic culture, which united Muslims of different countries into a single entity. It caused the Hui to emerge from a combination of foreign elements and domestic inhabitants, creating new species, that planted roots and produced fruit in the vast land of China.

So, what does it mean to be Hui in China? The following article suggests that the explanation lies in the Hui's own perception of their identity relative to their surroundings. They are a community of Islamic faith distinguished among Chinese people adhering to other religions; they are a Hui ethnicity among other Muslim minorities populating China; they are a Hui nationality among the 56 distinguished by the Chinese government; they are Chinese to an outsider.

Who are the HUI? Generalizations and Misconceptions

Are the Hui of a Common Descent?

According to official histories and minority nationality maps before their identification by the state in the 1950's, the Hui were not a *minzu*, a nationality, in the modern sense of the term. Like many other groups, the Hui emerged only in the transition from empire to nation-state. The people now known as the Hui are descended from Persian, Arab, Mongolian, and Turkish Muslim merchants, soldiers, and officials who settled in China from the seventh to fourteenth centuries and intermarried with local non-Muslim women.

The wide diversity within Hui communities and the various ways Hui are maintaining the "pure and true" (*Qing Zhen)* lifestyle in Chinese society have often hidden their identity. At one extreme are those who portray the Hui as "Muslims in China" – communities defined solely in terms of their religion. This position has led one scholar to assert that "Islam in China is, by definition, potentially rebellious and secessionist," and Chinese Islam is, perhaps, a contradiction in terms. The Hui are often portrayed as members of a homogeneous Muslim community in a hostile Chinese world, like Muslims everywhere who reside outside the Muslim world in non-Muslim states. In this case the Hui are depicted as Muslims in China totally distinct from the Han majority, and likely to either rebel against the non-Muslim state or, failing in that endeavor, to totally assimilate. Assimilation or secession are the only options available to Muslims in China, according to this view.

Changing Labels: From Religion to Nationality?

Largely living in isolated communities the only thing that some but not all had in common was a belief in Islam. Until the 1950's in China, Islam was known simply as the"Hui religion!" (Hui jiao) – believers in Islam were Huijiao believers. Until then, any person who was a believer in Islam was a "Hui religion disciple." One was accepted into Hui communities and mosques simply on the basis of being a Muslim. If one stopped believing in Islam, one lost one's membership in that community of faith. Han could become Hui through conversion, and Hui could revert to being Han through apostasy (disbelieving).

After the fall of the last Chinese empire (the Qing) and rise of nationalism in the first half of the twentieth century, the Hui emerged as one of several nationalities pressing for recognition. This recognition as a nationality has helped to objectify their ethnicity. Not that the Hui previously had no ethnic consciousness. Rather, prior to state recognition, Hui ethnic identity was localized and less specific. Hui related to each other as fellow Muslims, not as *minzu*. Now that Hui national identity has been legitimated and legalized by the state, the Hui are beginning to objectify their identity, to think of themselves and relate to each other in ethnic terms.

Hui in China, no matter where one travels, now refer to themselves as the Hui people (Hui *minzu*). Hui are generally offended in China when asked if they believe in the Hui religion, as they take great pride in being members of a world religion, the international Islamic Umma. Nevertheless, the label "Hui nationality" is beginning to stick, particularly as participation in the ethnic group carries with it important practical benefits. These labels are becoming more and more accepted by the people, stimulating further communication,

exchange, and reference between the so-called Hui communities.

Despite the continued diversity among these communities, a process of ethnogenesis has brought them closer together, through dialogue with state policy and local traditions. Nationalization is assisted by the acceptance of the label Hui, increased "pan-Hui" interaction, and mandatory education in special state sponsored Hui schools. The Hui, of course, desire more political power through larger numbers, and they are beginning to argue for and experience the national unity of their people.

Are they Physically Different? Opposing Facts

YES...

Those who portray the Hui as entirely distinct from the Han and other peoples among whom they live frequently point to unique, often foreign, physical features that characterize many of them.

In the northwest, where Hui are more concentrated and perhaps continue to preserve more of their Central Asian heritage, physical differences distinguishing them from the Han often strike the casual observer. Hazel-green eyes, long beards, high-bridged noses, and light, even red, hair are not unusual among the Hui. Frederick R. Wulsin, who traveled throughout Chinese Inner Asia on the celebrated 1923 National Geographic expedition, observed:

> The individual Moslems that one meets show much physical diversity. Some cannot be distinguished from ordinary Chinese except by the way they cut their moustaches. Others are quite distinct from the Chinese in appearance. Near Ningsia and Lanzhou one sees many tall Moslems, standing from 5 ft. 7 in. to 5 ft. 11 in. They are spare, long limbed and active. The forehead is high, the face long, and the nose well developed and aquiline, the eye horizontal and large. I cannot say whether the Mongol eye fold is always present. The beard is abundant, though never as great as in the European. Men like this are spoken of as the Arab Hui.

Even in eastern urban areas like Beijing and Shanghai, one is often surprised to meet Hui who look decidedly unlike the majority of the Han they live among. Hui in Beijing have complained to me that, as children, they were often taunted by their playmates, called "little Hui Hui," "big nose," "foreigner," and other such derogatory epithets. There are, however, many Hui who take great pride in their different looks. Upon one's first arrival in a Hui village or home, the locals frequently bring out the individual with the largest nose, longest beard, fullest eyebrows, most extended earlobes, and say: "Look at this guy, he's a real Hui!" Hui often cultivate their beards, regarding it as a duty of Islam to let them grow as long as possible and keep them meticulously clean. In North China, where heavier bearded men are common, I was pulled aside once by a Hui friend who pointed out a Han merchant who also sported a black cap and long beard, like many Hui in the marketplace. When I asked how he knew he was a Han, he answered:

> Of course he's a Han, you can tell by his dirty cap, his long messy beard, and, besides, he's smoking a cigarette in public!

...and NO

At the other extreme are those who regard the Hui as virtually indistinguishable from the larger population, referring to them as "Chinese Muslims." In this case, the Hui are said to have essentially assimilated into the Han, differing from them only in certain religious beliefs and archaic customs, as a Buddhist might differ from a Daoist. This position is appealing at first glance because Hui often appear culturally and linguistically similar to the Han among whom they live. To many observers, the Hui do not stand out from the broader Han majority, and this physical and linguistic invisibility has led to a questioning of the existence of a Hui ethnic identity. Thus, many writers continue to suggest that the Hui differ from the Han only in religion.

In areas where Hui are less openly religious, the pork tabu becomes the most distinguishing marker of identity. "Hui are just Han who do not eat pork," I was told by a cadre in Tianjin. This was echoed by similar comments from Han throughout China. Most Hui agree

that one of the central notions of their understanding of Islamic purity is the abstention from pork. I was surprised when several informants even included the pork tabu as one of the 5 central tenets of Islam. Yet, as I discovered in my research, there are large populations of Hui recognized by the state who no longer practice Islam nor maintain Islamic dietary restrictions.

If the Hui are so similar to the Han, is it merely religion that separates them, or do they really constitute a separate ethnic group? Traditional ethnicity models have not been very helpful in providing an answer to this question. The wide ethnographic and religious variety found among the Hui who, despite their diversity, continue to regard themselves as one group, and are recognized by the state as minority nationality, wreak havoc on most of these theories.

Socio-Cultural Diversity

According to the official nationality census and literature in China, the Hui people are the third most populous of China's 55 recognized minority nationalities. With a population of at least 8.6 million according to the 1990 census, the Hui are the most numerous of the 10 nationalities recognized by the state as adhering to Islam as their nationality religion.

Living in the "Q'uran belt"

The Hui are the most widespread minority, inhabiting every region, province, city, and over 97 percent of the nation's counties, living in 2,308 of 2,372 counties and cities across China. This substantiates the popular Hui conception that they are "spread widely and concentrated narrowly."

As the most widespread and third most numerous of China's minority nationalities, the Hui have more autonomous administrative units assigned to them than any other minority including one autonomous region, two autonomous prefectures, and nine autonomous countries, as well as numerous autonomous townships that have only recently been established.

It is conventionally thought that China's Muslim minorities are concentrated in the northwest corner, near Soviet Central Asia. The Hui minority, however are mainly spread throughout China's Inner Asia. This region is at the juncture of four distinct cultures – the Central Asian, Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese (Han) – and encompasses a vast area including Xinjiang, Ningxia, Gansu, and Qinghai, which has been justifiably referred to as China's "Q'uran belt."

How do they differ from other Muslims?

The Hui are distinguished from the other 9 Muslim nationalities in China by not having a language of their own. They speak the dialects of the other ethnic groups with whom they live, mainly the Han. Thus, in the past, they have been somewhat inaccurately labeled as the "Chinese-speaking Muslims." Among those recognized by the state as Hui, however, there is extremely wide linguistic variety. These include Hui in non-Han majority areas who have adopted the language, dress, and customs of their minority neighbors, such as the "Tibetan Hui" in Lhasa; the "Mongolian Hui" in Inner Mongolia; the "Dai Hui" and the "Bai Hui" in Yunnan.

All these seemingly multi-ethnic peoples – the Bai, Tibetan, and Hainanese Muslims – are registered as Hui by the State Commission of Nationality Affairs and are considered members of the Hui nationality just as the Muslim Cantonese, Shanghainese, Fujianese, and other non-Mandarin speakers are registered as Hui, so these groups do not have their own ethnonym, or legal separate ethnic status. These Hui peoples are counted by the state simply as Hui.

Interestingly enough, after living for 30 years under this policy, despite their linguistic diversity and multi-cultural background, they themselves claim membership in the same Hui ethnic group as other Hui in China and often quoted the popular phrase: "All Hui under Heaven are one family."

Maintaining Hui lineage. Problems of marriage.

For Hui living in pockets of isolated Hui communities in Han majority areas, finding an

appropriate Hui spouse can be a difficult task. It is a pressing issue for Hui who wish to preserve their ancestral traditions and maintain their Hui community. Intermarriage between Hui women and Han men from outside some communities is virtually unknown.

I often asked throughout China whether a Han who believes in Islam and wants to marry a Hui could become a Hui. Hui workers and farmers always agreed this was possible. Only cadres and intellectuals were inclined to deny the possibility. Officially, Han conversion to Islam at the time of intermarriage with a Hui should not involve a change in ethnic registration. Conversely, when I asked if Hui could lose their ethnicity through atheism or violation of *qing zhen*, not one Hui said that it would be possible. Such a person would merely be considered a "bad Hui." This reveals that Hui rarely make the distinction between ethnicity and religion, and, according to most Hui, ethnic change is unidirectional: Han can become Hui, but Hui cannot become Han.

Thus, locating a Hui spouse may be challenging – especially if one does not want to marry the boy next door. The patterns Hui have established and the networks they have developed to solve this problem tell us much about the desire of the Hui to establish and maintain their identity.

What do they do? Personal Accounts

Hui have occupied a large variety of economic niches throughout the history of China. Most of these were related to their Islamic restrictions in diet and hygiene, leading them to take up such occupations as restauranteur, innkeeper, shepherd, cavalrymen, carver, butcher, tanner, tea trader, jeweler, interpreter, and clergyman. In the north, the majority of Hui are wheat and dry-rice agriculturalists, while in the south, they are primarily engaged in wet-rice cultivation and aquiculture. In urban centers, the majority are employed in common labor and industry. Since the collectivization campaigns of the 1950's, most Hui have been prevented from engaging in the small private businesses that were their traditional specializations.

The Cook's Story

The Hui are China's most urbanized minority nationality. The issues and concerns facing these Hui as they seek to continue to adapt to changing urban life are well illustrated by the following conversation with a Hui cook at a small *qing zhen* restaurant in one northern city:

> Near the railroad station there are often many small privately run food stalls where one can find a wide assortment of local specialties. On one stall, a large blue banner was hung with flowery white Arabic writing across the center, bordered by the Chinese for "Qing Zhen Restaurant, Hui Snacks." A smaller sign below proclaimed that this restaurant specialized in Hezhou beef hand-pulled noodles. In the glass cabinet where the chile, garlic, and other spices were kept was a small mirror with the insignia of a yellow teapot and the characters for *qing zhen* clearly printed on its lid. A young man was busily kneading the dough while keeping rhythm with the pop music on the large portable stereo cassette player. He wore the white Hui hat often seen on the street throughout northwest China but rarely found outside of mosques or restaurants in central and southern urban centers.
>
> I approached the young cook and gave him the traditional Hui greeting, *A-salam alaykum*. He replied, *Alaykum a-salam* and offered me a stool. I explained that I was traveling through on my way to Beijing where I went to school. He immediately asked if I needed a place to stay. He suggested, "You'll have to go to the mosque and ask the *ahong* if anyone can take you in." He said most of the Hui in the city were concentrated near the mosque, which lay in the western side of the urban center, outside the old city walls. I explained that I would need to stay in the hotel in town for foreigners. He refused to believe that I was not Chinese and suggested several times that I must be from Xinjiang. Despite his looking at my student card, I still had difficulty convincing him.
>
> From his accent I could tell he was not from Hezhou (presently Linxia, Gansu). He said he had relatives there and they taught him how to make the noodles in the Hezhou spicy style. "Besides," he added, "everyone knows Hezhou hand-pulled

noodles are the best Hui noodles. I made a lot more money after I put up the Hezhou noodle sign. Even the Han like to eat the beef noodles, but they don't like the mountain taste of lamb." It turned out that he did not own the restaurant, but was working under an assumed registration. The registration is hard to come by and the application process is often time-consuming. He said he was working under his friend's name until he could get enough money to start his own restaurant.

After my third visit to the restaurant, Ma Xinhua explained he could not get a permit without his residence committee chairman's assistance. Unfortunately, they did not get along and he had to work under his friend's registration. As an unemployed youth, he had little choice but to try and open a restaurant or engage in some other small trade like fixing bicycles or selling clothing bought from Shanghai. He could not test high enough to get into high school, even though as a minority he received special consideration on the entrance exams. He opened the restaurant because his father and grandfather had all run noodle stands before 1949. During the 1950's collectivization campaigns, his father's small café was combined with the other small Hui restaurants into a large state-run Hui restaurant, and he went to work in a food-processing factory. His mother and sisters often come to help him in the noodle stand. "It's good he started this restaurant," his mother said, "maybe he will meet a nice Hui girl to marry." She was very much against his marrying a Han, but it was difficult to meet single Hui girls of the right age and background in the factories and institutes where most Hui work in the city.

On my fourth visit to the restaurant, the youth admitted, after making sure no one else was listening, that the owner who had put up the money to open the restaurant was a Han. This is a practice known among Hui as "wearing a hat." The owner knew that he could make money on a Hui restaurant. "Hui can't eat in a Han restaurant, but anyone can eat in a Hui restaurant, and many Han like the spicy noodles," Ma noted. He quickly explained that, although the restaurant was owned and registered to a Han, Hui handled all the food. "Not like the large state-run Hui restaurant downtown," he complained, "where most of the waiters are Han and even some of the cooks." Many Hui wold not eat there because it's not pure and true enough. The Hui concentrated around the mosque were all "united," he said, and very few of them ate in the state-run restaurant. They preferred to eat at home or patronize a few well-known Hui restaurants. "But a lot of the young people and workers are more casual," he added, "and, although they don't eat pork at home, they sometimes go to Han restaurants. You'll never see this outside the city in the Hui villages."

The Martial-Arts Specialists' Stories

"I travel all over the Country because, of *wushu* (Chinese traditional martial arts) competitions," Bai Minxiong complained, "and it's very difficult for me to maintain my *qing zhen* lifestyle."

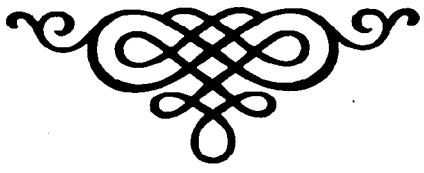
The Hui *wushu* boxing style is well known among martial artists, and few practice so hard as young Bai. Unlike many of his secularized Hui friends, Bai really struggles over the problems of maintaining his faith and *qing zhen* lifestyle while on the national sports-competition circuit. He is often encouraged by his teammates to give up his "backward" ethnic customs. In some ways, his early training reflects the traditional way Hui learned martial arts. His father was a well-known *ahong* and martial-arts expert who taught his students *wushu* in the mosque compound. "You never know when you might be called on to defend your religion," Bai remembers his father telling him. A recent pamphlet, "*Wushu* Among Chinese Moslems," refers to this tradition of self-defense:

> In the centuries-old feudal society, the Hui were cruelly exploited and ruthlessly suppressed whenever they showed the least resistance or discontent. In the Qing Dynasty (AD 1644-1911), for instance, the rulers decreed that three or more Hui walking together with weapons on them would be severely punished, and, if they committed crimes, they would have the characters *Hui zei* (meaning "Hui rebel") tattooed on their faces. This was meant to be a humiliation to them and at the same time served as a warning to the others. But it failed to intimidate the Hui people; they fought back and waged prolonged struggles in the course of which many heroes emerged from among them... To foster perseverance and courage among the Hui people, their chiefs called

upon them to go in for *wushu* as a "holy practice" in the struggle for survival and self-improvement.

The Hui look up to famous *wushu* artists that took part in "righteous uprisings" against oppressive regimes.

Zhao Changjun is another famous *wushu* specialist. The 27-year-old student of Ma Zhengba – the famous Hui *wushu* master from Van, he has won the National Wushu Championship 5 times and has performed in over 20 countries." I am a Hui, and I'm glad to be competing in Yinchuan, the capital of the Hui autonomous region," he told me at the 1985 National Competition, which he won. When I asked him why he worked so hard, he quietly told me: "As a Hui, I not only have to compete on behalf of my country, but I also fight for my people. I am Chinese first, but I am also Hui."



ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT

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1. MONGOLIA IN 1990's

(Morris Rossabi, *Mongolia in the 1990s: from Commissars to Capitalists?* in www.soros.org/mongolia/rossabi.html)

The Mongols' natural environment has shaped their history. Their location in North Asia, with its extremes in temperature and resultant short growing season, precludes intensive agriculture. Grasslands in the central part of the country have traditionally sustained most of the Mongol population, who tended sheep, goats, yaks, horses, and camels. Mongol herdsmen traveled to seek water and grass for their animals. They migrated from two to as many as ten times a year to find sufficient pasture lands, and such frequent migrations dictated that the groups be relatively small and readily mobile. Similarly, the Mongols, seeking out their livelihood in the Gobi desert, south of the steppe lands, or in the forest and lakes region, north of the steppes, journeyed around the countryside and were organized into small units.

The Communist Legacy

For seventy years, the Mongol Communist leadership modeled its rule on that of the USSR. In the 1930's, Marshal Choibalsan, often referred to as Mongolia's Stalin, initiated a ruthless assault on Buddhism. The state expropriated much of the property, including land, art works, and animals, from the Buddhist lamaseries, ordered the destruction of most of the monasteries, and sanctioned the killing of recalcitrant monks. A flourishing religious establishment numbering over 100,00 monks dwindled to less than a thousand by the late 1980's.

Initiated in the 1930's shortly after the similar collectivization of agriculture in the USSR, the collectives met stiff resistance from the herders, many of whom killed their own animals instead of turning them over to the collectives. Great loss of life and a disastrous decline in the number of livestock prompted the government to call a halt to this effort. Two decades later the government resumed the policy of collectivization through the imposition of higher taxes on private herds, and by the late 1950s the vast majority of

herders had been compelled to join *negdels* (or collectives). The government initiated compulsory education and provided free boarding schools for the herders' children. It also furnished the herders with medical care, maternity leave, and pensions.

Ironically, the new policy did not deviate too sharply from traditional practices. Like the earlier system, collectivization also permitted no private ownership of grasslands but did not interfere with the herders decisions about tending of animals. Yet the herds did not increase dramatically, partly because of the natural catastrophes (droughts, heavy snowfalls, appallingly cold winters, etc.) that periodically afflicted the steppe lands. The state converted herdsmen into wage-earners and continued to pay them regardless of performance, contributing to the lack of incentives.

The Soviet Union and eventually the Eastern European Communist states subsidized the principal industries that began to be developed in the 1950's. Extractive and animal-related industries predominated. A copper and molybdenum complex, the largest such development, opened in the new city of Erdenet. Cashmere, carpet, camel wool, and coat factories were established in the capital city of Ulaan Baatar and other small cities and towns. Urban growth, with Russian-style buildings, accompanied this industrialization. An unfavorable balance of trade for the Mongols, due to their need to import oil, heavy machinery, and such consumer goods as flour and sugar, resulted in Soviet subsidies and loans, offering the USSR great leverage over the Mongol economy. Because Russia provided subsidies for 30% of Mongolia's gross domestic product and much of its technical expertise, Mongolia could not readily detach itself from Soviet influence.

The changes in Soviet policy in the 1980's generated by *glasnost* and *perestroika* reverberated in Mongolia. In 1987, Mongolia initiated diplomatic relations with the U.S. and negotiated protocols for initiated diplomatic relations.

Economic shock therapy, 1990-92

With the support of the young and somewhat inexperienced economists, the government launched a wide-ranging program of privatization. Appalled by the low productivity in the countryside, it sought to disband the *negdels* to provide the herders with their own animals and to develop a market economy. The herders initially balked, fearing that marketing their products could be cumbersome, that privatization would eliminate state-guaranteed incomes and would necessitate payment of taxes, and that the new system would jeopardize their social welfare benefits. They eventually formed shareholding companies, which managed sales and marketing and reputedly protected the herders' interests while permitting them ownership of animals. However, critics complained that the companies simply maintained the authority of the old officials.

Similarly, privatization of industries did not proceed as smoothly as anticipated. The government issued vouchers to be used to purchase shares in previously state-owned enterprises, but the implementation of the plan was mismanaged, inefficient, and corrupt.

The Soviet withdrawal of economic and military aid truly undermined the government's efforts. The sudden cessation of such assistance, which amounted to more than 30% of the country's gross domestic product exerted enormous pressure on the government and society. Severe fuel shortages idled factories, and unemployment rose dramatically while production declined.

The initial euphoria in both government and society about reaffirmation of the Mongol heritage began to fade as economic conditions worsened. Scholars and the general public had rehabilitated Chinggis Khan and had depicted him as a heroic figure and father of the Mongol empire. Films, plays, and even popular songs dealt with his life and significance, and his reputed portrait was ever present in a variety of milieu, from hotels to vodka labels to paper money.

Attempts at stability, 1992-96

The economic crises and the unfulfilled expectations toppled the government in 1992 during the first parliamentary elections under the new constitution. The succeeding government slowed down the transition

to a market economy and privatization. It curtailed the economic shock therapy of previous regime and emphasized stability. Its principal economic goal was to compensate for the losses incurred as a result of the withdrawal of Soviet aid. Assisted over the next three years by rising prices for copper and cashmere, two principal exports, the government began to stabilize the economy.

Yet the government did not cope effectively with several serious problems. Real wages had not kept up with inflation, and unemployment had continued to rise. By 1996, the government faced a grave crisis. Corruption, inefficiency, and mismanagement plagued the economy, and the government did not levy and collect sufficient revenue to fulfill its responsibilities. Unrest and social fragmentation, attested to by the growing numbers of abandoned children, a higher incidence of crime and prostitution, and a dramatic increase in unemployment, afflicted the towns and cities, which endured most of these hardships.

Present conditions and prospects

It is difficult to foretell future prospects for the present government and for Mongolia in general. Like the earliest Mongol khans, the present leadership still has to contend with unpredictable environmental conditions, which may undercut the best laid plans. In addition, Mongolia is increasingly tied to the regional and indeed world economy and will thus face the vicissitudes of the market demand for its exports of copper, cashmere, and, potentially, oil. Regional conditions, including relations with both Russia and China, add still other uncertainties to any predictions.

The current government has committed itself to privatization and a free market as the solutions to Mongolia's economic problems and as the means for economic revitalization and growth. Officials responsible for oversight of the economy point to the lumbering state-run and state-owned industries as examples of waste, mismanagement, and inefficiency, and criticize and their poor service. Seeking to reduce the government role in the economy, these officials reiterate the mantra of privatization and a free market as a panacea for economic problems. Yet privatization in and of itself might generate other difficulties (e.g. unemployment) that could prove socially and economically disruptive.

Because privatization is not the answer in this case, the government will need to marshal its resources and to seek foreign investment to initiate infrastructure reforms. Much of the economic development will be based on extractive industries, tapping Mongolia's natural resources, and will also require vast, probably foreign, investment. Also, the government may be required to scale back its vision concerning remarkable increases in the herds based on the transition from *negdels* to privatization. The available land limits such increases, and "economic incentives to increase livestock productivity must be realistic in regard to constraints imposed by environment and ecological limitation of grazing land eco-systems." Moreover, economic incentives may not be effective with nomadic herdsmen who traditionally favor immediate consumption and disdain savings.

The government will also need to cope with economic problems that have remained intractable since the development of a free market economy. Inflation, which was virtually nonexistent during the Communist era, has been endemic for the past seven years, adding to Mongol fiscal woes is corruption. Rumors about bribery and graft in government have continued to surface even after the victory of the Democratic Union. Tax evasion is reputedly rampant, and many investors lack confidence in the fair and proper operation of the Stock Exchange. The new leadership will need to address such rumors if it expects to gain the confidence and loyalty of the population. Still another problem is the rate of unemployment, officially estimated at about 20% in the urban areas but which some observers believe to be as high as 50%. Greater privatization, particularly of state-run enterprises, could increase the figure and pose even more social welfare problems.

2. BOUNTY FROM THE SHEEP

(Tserendash Namkhainyambuu, Excerpts from Bounty From the Sheep, translated from Mongolian and adapted by Mary Rossabi, in *Aramco World, 2000. Permission pending.*)

The following passages are found in the life story of Tserendash Namkhainvainbuu, a contemporary Mongolian herder. In this short book, he describes his early life, his family, his education and his experiences as a shepherd. His success in raising thousands of sheep above the quota demanded by the state, won him many honors and privileges and the title of Hero of Labor.

After the downfall of socialism in the early 1990's, Namkhainyambuu served in the Parliament for about four years and moved with his wife and nine children from northwestern Mongolia to the outskirts of the capital city of Man Baatar where he lives today. He and his wife, Jargal, decided not to return to their former home so that their children could receive a better education in the capital city. The State gave them an apartment in the city where the children live during the week and come home to the family ger, or tent/home, on weekends. However, Namkhainyambuu could not raise enough animals to feed his family, nor could he enjoy the profits from the wool, meat and hides of the sheep as he did when he lived in the northwest, so he supplements his income by working as a "concierge" in a university dormitory. The selections below demonstrate Namkhainyambuu's expertise as a herder as well as his ability to describe clearly and colorfully the life of a Mongolian shepherd.

My childhood wasn't that special or different from that of my peers. I was born in the sixth month of 1948, which is the year of the mouse according to the solar calendar, in the area of Tariat River in northwestern Mongolia. My father's family name was Shaj, and my mother's surname was Tseren.

My grandfather Shaj had many brothers and sisters. He was an educated man who served the state as a clerk, although he did not have the power to make decisions. He was considered rather poor, having only sixty goats, two horses, and seldom more than ten sheep. My father was the youngest child and the only boy among seven girls.

All of my extended family were delighted that my parents' firstborn child was a son. My parents then went on to have four more children, two daughters and two sons.

As I was the first boy in the family, I was somewhat spoiled, at least until I went to school. It was in 1957 that my sister and I entered school. And it was then that I sat at a desk for the first time. Our teacher was an honest and proper young man who had handsome penmanship, painted well, and could belt his *del* very beautifully. I can still picture all of this clearly.

The school was well equipped. It was housed in five or six simple buildings, which included lesson rooms, a kitchen, and a dormitory complex. But because of the inadequate number of dormitory beds, few children could sleep at school, and many went home each day to their families. In the spring and fall, we went to school by horse, riding a distance of five to ten kilometers. We left home at dawn, our cotton schoolbags stuffed with lesson books, and all rode out together, two to a horse. On the return trip, it was all right to dawdle and play a bit on the open *steppe*; sometimes we had slingshot competitions on horseback.

The school year began in autumn and ended in the spring. We spent the summer in the countryside, riding horses and looking after sheep, giving no thought to the reconvening of school in the fall. We children particularly enjoyed making the horses run fast. In addition, riding a fast horse was a good way of escaping from the evening milking. Unfortunately, I wasn't a good horseman. In my community I was even rejected from training horses for the long-distance running, so I had to herd sheep and prepare the cows for milking.

Unforgettable Adventures

Although we had many lovely summers midst green grass, rain and shining sun, there were also dry years when we had to find new areas of vegetation. In one such arid year, we spent a happy summer in the neighboring province of Uvs in the eastern wooded county of Dalan. "When there is not enough, we share"

was our philosophy and there were no disputes over pastureland. Likewise, when the winter was severe, we shared our land with other families. Today, the same situation continues and the people from Zavhan and Uvs provinces live like brothers in peace and prosperity.

Our county was near the great Mongolian desert, which we passed through with our herds on the way to our winter quarters. We prepared most of the night before crossing the desert. By dawn the pack animals were loaded and we began moving. After crossing the desert, we stopped for a few days and then we would move again. The cattle needed to be tended both day and night, and the skill of the strong herders was necessary. Even to this day, we move in this fashion, but we don't load our children onto camels anymore. Now we transport them, and the old women, across the desert by truck, so that they can arrive early and prepare greetings for the men [and the younger women] who with the herds struggle across the sands.

Through a combination of *steppe* and desert, we moved and settled our herds in different pastures, according to the season. Families settled for a long time near each other and became like brothers. The children became friends, but because they were on the move, they had to separate, doing so with tears in their eyes.

One day, the children decided to play near the river pulling the calves' tails and catching the young animals with an *urga* (a kind of whip or lasso). Children who recently came from *khankokh* land had a good whip and could throw it well. We didn't have a genuine *urga* so we had to use one that was made of poor quality wood. Nevertheless, we did our best to compete with these children.

Our work began when the sun rose and the horned cattle had their fill along the river. We often had no idea that time was passing. The oxen and their young under one half years of age were urged on by a whip and caught with a lasso. During the noontime gathering of the sheep, our parents started to look for their children. They followed us on horseback, and when they found us, they slapped us and made us weep. They then broke our *urgas* and took our straps away. We were punished by being made to be quiet for several days, which was unusual for our settlement, and when I complained to my mother, things became worse. Later I was beaten. When children disobey and don't care for the herds properly, adults punish them.

In our area Aliudai was an awesome, frightening, fat old man who punished his children severely when they misbehaved. I did not like him because once I saw him beat Radnaabazaar. One day when Aliudai came to the house, my mother restrained the dogs, and I had the task of resaddling his horse. I first took a dried sheep's bladder, blew it up, and lightly tied it into a pillow and slipped it under Aliudai's saddle cushion. Then, with my friends, I filled his left stirrup with cow dung and as quickly as possible went to hide. Aliudai soon dismounted and went to speak to my mother. I felt very guilty about what I had done. My mother told me not to fool around with older people and said that Aliudai would not punish me. Hearing that, I was moved to tears and I said to my mother that I did it to get back at Aliudai for beating Radnabazaar. My mother then caressed me and sniffed my head. [Especially older Mongolians sniffed the head, cheeks, forehead etc. of those they loved, just as we kiss]. Later, Aliudai behaved toward us as if nothing had happened and awarded us a sugar loaf. After that incident, I have learned to respect older people.

Helpful Children

Old people like obedient children with gentle ears and at the same time we children greatly value the labor of our elders. Children search for dung together and fill their baskets cooperatively. They not only fill the dung basket but heap it up to overflowing, which is very satisfying. Our parents have always told us that a full basket of dung insured a full bowl of food.

In the evening, while the kids and goats were tethered, we willingly separated our herds from our neighbors and we recognized not only our own herds, but those of our neighbors as well. One man looked after all five types of herds [sheep, goats, horses, camels and cows] and the calves and lambs. People who lost cattle put out the word, and if you had not noticed the strays in your herds, it was most embarrassing. When the neighbors said "Your children

have a good eye for cattle," it was like getting a big prize. We all worked together shearing the sheep, castrating the livestock, making felt, and cutting the grass in the meadow. We proudly participated in all of these activities, and woke early in the morning to get to work. My parents said: "Look and learn" and made an example of hard work.

When I was about 10 years old, I finished the fourth class with honors. Some of my classmates went on to the seven year school in the Tsetsen Uul County but the majority of us wished to go to the countryside to herd. Parents were pleased when their children finished primary school and doors to further education opened to them. But instead I opened the door to the "university of life" whose education lasts forever. Entering into the science of herding sheep was like being introduced to a thick book one never finishes.

A Boy with the Eye of a Shepherd

In my childhood, I was encouraged when adults said to me "You have quite a good eye for the herds," and maybe these words shaped the long road of my life and work. Once I saw the herds, I could always recognize them. I always tried to help people who had lost their cattle. "The herders should know all the cattle individually" our father had always said. I knew that I wanted to go to the countryside to be a herdsman and I thought neither about the successes of herding nor did I regret not completing my education.

Difficult Obstacles

A herder appears to lead a simple life but I knew that there were obstacles. In 1968, a year of serious snowstorms, we cared for the animals day and night, but, still, many died. With so many cattle dying, the value of those who do live becomes higher. As my father noted. "The men fell seven times and rose eight" which means that things didn't always stay so bad. After a year of hard work, things did, indeed, get better.

Herders usually get drenched in the cold rain both day and night, and in the morning snowstorms one often felt as if one had neither eyes nor ears. Sometimes there was nice weather and on a lovely day one could even say that herding was enjoyable. But, when the winter sun barely shone and the icy winds blew, I often asked myself, "Why do I live in the countryside? Who told me to live like this?" Maybe I should follow the others who had moved to the city and are working there. My classmates from school became cultured teachers, engineers, and specialists but I'm still sitting here in this severe weather in the countryside. When I see a truck driver go along the *steppe* kicking up the dust and a pilot in the deep blue sky like a bird, I think that I should go to a place where there are many people. But I ask myself, "How can I be most useful to my nation?" and I know that I can do that and be happy by being a herder as fate has planned for me. It has been my experience that when someone works very hard, the results are special. There are always obstacles which are difficult to overcome, but none that cannot be overcome.

3. UNAVOIDABLE CORRUPTION

(A Caspian Gamble, in *The Economist*, February 7th 1998. © 1998 The Economist Newspaper Group, Inc. Reprinted with permission. Further reproduction prohibited: Www:economist.com)

Put your house in order

There are weak and corrupt bureaucracies about throughout the post-Soviet world, but the Caspian states seem to have more than their fair share. Graft is pervasive at every level of government, though at the top it is difficult to prove. In Kazakhstan, for instance, a $500 million cash payment made by Mobil for some of its share in the Tengiz oil field allegedly never reached the budget. The word in Baku is that backhanders above $100,000 are apportioned by the Azeri cabinet.

Mid-ranking corruption is more formalized. In Azebaijan virtually all political positions that involve the collection of money must be bought. The job of a tax inspector, for instance, might cost about $50,000 up front. In Uzbekistan the going rate for an import licence is 10% of the value of the goods. Every part of the public sector is included in the game. According to Nurbulat Masanov, a professor of political science at Almaty university, many academics have begun to take bribes from their students. A good grade on a term

paper will command $10-20. Passing a difficult exam could cost as much as $200. The World Bank has estimated that in Azerbaijan informal payments for health services (such as bribes for access to doctors, hospital beds and medicines) run to 5-6% of GDP, compared with only 2% spent on health by the government.

Rankings compiled by the EBRD suggest that Tajikistan is the most corrupt country in the region, and Georgia too suffers badly from graft. The other countries are not far behind. Other sources disagree on the order, claiming that oil-rich Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan are even more prone to corruption than the rest. But nobody disputes that all the Central Asian countries have a considerable problem.

A legacy of graft

In part, corruption in the region is a legacy of the old Soviet regime. In its declining years the communist system lived on bureaucratic fiddling, particularly in Central Asia. Shara Rashidov, first secretary of the Uzbek Communist party during the Brezhnev era, became famous for milking the Soviet treasury of $2 billion by falsifying the cotton production statistics. Uzbeks now regard him as a hero.

More recently, as the planned economy has crumbled, the half-reformed hybrid that has taken its place cries out for backhanders. Factories with no clear owners employ many phantom workers; companies with no markets resort to complex barter deals, with every party taking a cut; state banks with no shareholders dole out credit to their friends, for a fee. When Hurricane Hydrocarbons, a Canadian oil company, took over Yuzhneftgaz, a Kazakh state oil firm, in 1996 and introduced electronic identity cards for its employees, 300 people on its payroll disappeared overnight.

The worst kind of petty corruption is generated by excessive government regulation administered by officials on miserable salaries. A civil servant in Azebijan earns an average of $30 a month. Many Central Asians spend more than that on cigarettes. They have little choice but to supplement their income by moonlighting or, more likely, with bribes.

The opportunities for extracting them are endless. Businessmen, whether local or foreign, must have innumerable permits, adhere to countless health, safety and environmental rules, and battle through (or evade) an often draconian tax system.

Much of the corruption could thus be viewed as an alternative tax system. Since official tax revenues and civil servants' salaries are nugatory, it might be argued, consumers of public services (such as foreign investors requiring permits, or the sick requiring medical treatment) pay for those services directly. However, this kind of informal taxation is not only unfair, it is also enormously inefficient. A slew of recent academic research has shown that the credibility of government institutions, and particularly the level of corruption, has a big impact on a country's growth rate. Broadly speaking, the more corrupt a country is, the more slowly it is likely to grow.

4. A CASPIAN GAMBLE

(A Caspian Gamble, in *The Economist*, February 7th 1998. © 1998 The Economist Newspaper Group, Inc. Reprinted with permission. Further reproduction prohibited. Www.economist.com)

The following collection of articles discusses the dilemmas that have been troubling the oil-rich States of Central Asia. Although the profits from the production and sale of oil seem to, "lie on the surface," getting hold of these profits is not easy. Government instability, corruption, a landlocked location, political conflicts in neighboring countries, as well as uncertainty about the future – all these factors hinder the development of oil and gas industry, the most promising industry for the region.

Introduction

Perched on the edge of an expensive black leather chair and dressed in an elegant double breasted suit, Valeh Allekerov impatiently corrects his translator. " No, no, no... I did not say foreign investment depends on the quality of government. I said it depends on the determination of the country's leader. Government is nothing but bureaucracy." A secretary in high-heeled ankle-boots hands Azebaijan's chief oil negotiator a

letter to sign. It is addressed to nine of the world's biggest oil companies. Mr Aleskerov glances at the contents, strikes one firm off the list and instructs his secretary to address each letter individually." We don't want them to know who else is getting one," he explains.

That little scene highlights two points crucial to understanding what is going on in Azebajian and the other newly independent countries around the Caspian. The first is that, regardless of what their constitutions may say, most of them are not democracies, nor do they have established government institutions. Barely six years after emerging from the rubble of the Soviet Union, the three Caucasian republics (Georgia, Armenia and Azebaijan) and the five Central Asian states (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhastan, Tajikistan and Kirgizstan) have been shaped largely by the handful of men that lead them. And it will be a small clutch of individuals that determine whether these countries become prosperous and independent or regress into kleptocracy and instability.

The second point to note is that many of these individuals and their followers are being courted by most of the world's oil companies. Attracted by substantial proven reserves, the world's oil bosses are falling over themselves to secure a piece of the Caspian action.

The former soviet republics also have a potent strategic importance. They are flanked to the east by a rising great power (China); to the north by their former hegemon (Russia); to the south by a country collapsed in violent chaos (Afghanistan), a fundamentalist Islamic republic (Iran), and a fragile secular state in search of a great regional role (Turkey). Along with these neighbors, a distant superpower seeks influence if not dominance (America).

The problem is that the Caspian oil and gas is useless unless it can reach the market, and it is situated in an entirely landlocked part of the world. Thus, the route of potential export pipelines will determine regional alignments and outside influence. At present, Russia controls all export routes, and can thus hold the region to ransom. Whether future pipelines head west, south or east will determine how that influence is challenged.

Central Asian states, countries that few people had heard of two years ago, make international headlines as journalist rediscover the "Great Game." At the same time, the original Great Game had only two big players, the empires of Russia and Britain. Today there are many more players, both outside and inside Central Asia. Where the old Great Game was rooted in tsarist expansionism, the new Great Game's origins lie in the collapse of the soviet empire. Where the 19th century emirs and khans gradually fell under Russian control, today's regional leaders are asserting their independence. And crucially, the prize – natural resource wealth – lies within the region.

Kazakhstan is a huge land mass with few people, full of oil, natural gas, gold, uranium, copper and many other minerals, and with vast agricultural potential. Azerbaijan and Turkemnistan have small populations, and lots of oil and gas, respectively. Uzbekistan has a sizeable population and is a big producer of cotton and gold. Kirgizstan has a bit of gold and lots of water–a resource that could conceivably become more important than oil within a generation. Tajikistan has some gold and not much else. Armenia and Georgia are short of natural resources, but are strategically placed for transport routes. These differences add up to an altogether more complicated game with higher stakes.

Unhappy past, uncertain future

How will resource wealth affect this region's future? It is easy to be pessimistic. History is awash with examples of countries that have squandered their natural resource wealth. To use natural resource riches sensibly takes wise and stable government, however, that is in short supply in the region. The Caspian's infant states have authoritarian leaders, faltering economies and burgeoning corruption. Outside meddling, particularly from Russia, has been short-sighted and destructive. Ethnic tensions, overt in some places, simmer below the surface virtually everywhere.

It is impossible to overestimate the difficulties these countries will face, but there are also grounds for optimism. After years of runaway inflation and chaos, several of the Central Asian states have recently made great economic strides. Given enlightened policies, both

outside and inside these countries, the Caspain region can prosper. In the absence of such policies, the new Great Game could become a great nightmare.

Oil drums calling

Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, is a city that wears its oil on its sleeve. The suburbs and the Caspian shoreline are littered with hundreds of rusting rigs. Downtown, intricate Italianate facades with wrought-iron balconies adorn the grand houses built a century ago by Azerbaijan's first oil millionaires. Today, these buildings house the paraphernalia of a new oil rush: fancy western restaurants, expensive perfumeries, designer shops and, of course, the oil companies themselves. More than 50 western oil firms have set up shop in Baku. Small talk in the city's bars soon turns to oil.

Ashgabat, the desert capital of gas-rich Turkmenistan, retains an eery Soviet-style calm, but the fresh tarmac on its roads, the swanky hotels, the brand-new football stadium and the ritzy presidential palace all suggest that the country's dictator is scattering cash he has not yet got.

Almaty, the commercial center – though no longer the capital – of Kazakhstan, lies far from the country's oil and gas fields, but even there oil wealth is all around: a Mobil petrol station greets the visitor outside the airport; the city center is full of American sport utility vehicles and designer boutiques. Such obvious opulence amidst the greyness of post-Soviet decline is a sure gauge of the expected bonanza.

No Persian Gulf

According to the International Energy Agency, global demand for oil is set to rise by at least a third by 2010. Most of the increase will be due to rising populations and rapid economic growth in South and East Asia. As rich countries increasingly rely on gas, demand is also likely to soar.

Though far smaller than those of the Middle East, the reserves on Central Asia are big by any other standards; significantly bigger, for example, than Europe's proven reserves. On a cautiously optimistic estimate, the Caspian Basin contains at least 100 billion barrels of oil, and perhaps the equivalent of the same again in gas. Moreover, the resource-rich Caspian states have relatively small population, so most of their oil and gas is likely to be exported, making the Caspian a useful counterbalance to the Middle East.

Unlike the majority of the world's proven oil reserves, these resources are available for exploitation by western firms. Iran and Iraq, the underdeveloped giants of the Persian Gulf, are closed to outsiders, so for the moment the oil firms are concentrating hard on the Caspian. Chevron, Mobil, British Petroleum, Agip, Texaco and other smaller companies venture to develop the Caspian oil fields.

The terms of Caspian deals are tough, and getting tougher. Oil executives moan that the amount of money going to governments, either up-front or as a share of future revenue, is much bigger than in traditional developing-country deals. "It's becoming impossible to make money," is a common grumble. But the scramble to sign deals suggests otherwise.

In search of stability

Oil companies take a more relaxed attitude to political risk than many other firms. They are used to dealing with violent or unstable countries. Because oil is simply pumped out of the ground and can be speedily exported, they can tolerate economic mismanagement, civil disobedience and even isolated violence in the host country more easily than other industries. But sovereignty clearly matters, and it is no coincidence that the big rush into the Caspian region has come as these countries' continued independence is increasingly assured.

That said, the Caspian remains one of the less stable parts of the world. Uncertainties about Russia's intention aside, conflict amongst the dozens of disparate and desperate Caucasian ethnic groups could easily flare up. And on the other side of the Caspian the chaos in Afghanistan and the near-chaos in Tajikistan are constant reminders of the region's potential for violence. These internal instabilities will not stop the development of Caspian resources, but they could will slow it down.

Property rights also seem reasonably secure. Although the legal systems in Central Asia are flawed (of which more later), the oil deals are on fairly firm ground. In Azerbaijan each production-sharing arrangement individually becomes law, rubber-stamped by the country's "parliament".

The one property-right question that remains unresolved is who actually owns much of the oil. Until 1991, the Caspian Sea was shared between the Soviet Union and Iran, under the terms of the 1921 Treaty of Moscow. But since the break-up of the Soviet Union its legal status has remained in limbo. The Russian say the states should have exclusive rights only to resources lying within 45 nautical miles of their shore. Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, by contrast, have the biggest fields on their doorsteps, so they want the whole of the Caspian to be divided into sectors and shared out among the littoral states. Turkmenistan began by supporting the Russian view but is now leaning the other way. So far, these disputes over ownership have had little practical effect.

Pipeline poker

Unlike any other big oil producers the Caspian states are landlocked. Before their crude reaches a tanker, it must cross at least one international border, possibly two. All existing oil and gas pipelines run through Russia, giving that country a stranglehold on exports which it is not afraid to use.

The problem with pipeline diplomacy is that it must combine often opposing commercial and political interests. Oil companies want the cheapest route to the best market. That makes a pipeline south from the Caspian through Iran to the Persian Gulf an attractive proposition. But the Americans worry that such a pipeline would dramatically increase Iran's influence in the region. Other vested interests seize upon such anxieties to press their favored alternatives. Georgia, for instance, hopes for a western route. As a transit country it would receive handsome tariff revenues. Thus the real fight about pipelines is as much about geopolitical influence as about the oil business itself.

The main future pipeline options are as follows:

•Northern routes, preferred by Russia. Kazakhstan could expand its existing pipelines to join the Russian system. Azerbaijan could build a big export pipeline from Baku to Novorossisk. Russia has offered to build a bypass around volatile Chechnya. But Azerbaijan is worried that the Russians will have a stranglehold, and the oil companies fret about security: even with a bypass, the pipeline would still be within shooting distance of the unpredictable Chechens.

•Western routes, favored by Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and America. The cheapest option (about $1.5 billion) is to build an upgraded pipeline to the Georgian port of Supsa and then ship the oil through the Black Sea and the Bosporus to Europe. However, Turkey claims that the Bosporus can not cope with any more tanker traffic. Istanbul could be avoided either by building a Bosporus by-pass from Bulgaria to Greece, or by constructing a pipeline from Baku to Ceyhan on the Turkish Mediterranean coast (number 5), which Turkey prefers. However, this route would pass through unstable Kurdish territory, and it would be by far the most expensive western option. Kazakh oil and Turkmen gas could feed into western routes via trans-Caspian pipelines.

•Southern routes, making commercial sense. Turkmenistan opened a gas pipeline to Iran in December 1997. The economics of an oil pipeline south to the Gulf are sound. Iran already has an extensive pipeline system, and the Gulf is a good exit point from which to serve Asian markets. But America vehemently opposes the route, and Azerbaijan too is wary of Iran. The route increases the world's reliance on the Straits of Hormuz.

•Eastern route. In September 1997 the Chinese signed a memorandum of understanding to build an eastward pipeline to China as part of a deal to buy two oil fields in Kazakhstan. About 2,000km long in Kazakhstan alone, this pipeline will almost certainly cost more than estimated. Few industry experts consider the pipeline commercially viable, but if China sees this as a strategic decision, it might be built anyway.

•South-eastern route. Unocal, an American oil company, wants to build gas and oil pipelines from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan (and perhaps to India later) at a comparatively low cost. Geographically, the route makes sense, but it passes through Afghanistan, a hopelessly torn country. Bankers might jib at funding a deal with the Taliban.

With so many options and so many competing interests, it is hard to predict where the pipelines will run. Given the strength of American support for the western route, a pipeline at least to Supsa is likely. What happens next depends on how the Bosporus problem can be resolved.

Ruinous riches?

"Sumgait: city of Tomorrow", claims a glossy promotional brochure prepared by the UN. Go anywhere near this chemical dustbin, half an hour's drive north of Baku. Sumgait used to be one of suppliers of chemical products to the Soviet market. In the city's industrial park, three dozen heavy industrial plants form a vast Orwellian wasteland of grey debris and broken concrete, rusting factories and abandoned railway tracks.

Sumgait is a reminder of the economic problems that Azerbaijan and the other Caspian petrol-states face. Only half an hour from booming Baku, it is a town in desperate decline: it's filthy and inefficient factories have no markets; their employees are, in effect, without jobs.

Once the oil firms have recouped their investment costs, the Caspian governments will start receiving large sums in oil revenue. For this money to promote general economic prosperity, the Caspian states must meet three conditions. First, they must maintain macroeconomic stability, encourage saving and foster free trade. Second, they must restructure industry and agriculture and ensure that workers have the right skills to move between them. Third, they must ensure that the oil and gas wealth is spent carefully and wisely, not squandered by a corrupt elite.

Fortune's wheel

Almost and every casino is thronged with the local nouveaux riches chancing their luck. At five o'clock on a Friday afternoon, the roulette table at Bakus Hyatt Regency is crowded with young Azeris as the cigarette smoke swirls around the glamorous Russian croupier, the bets are placed (usually several hundred dollars a throw) and the wheel starts to spin amid growing excitement. Every gambler stares, mesmerized, waiting for his win.

In much of the Caspian today, the mood echoes that of the casino. Oil companies, foreign governments, local political leaders and ordinary people alike are obsessed with the big prize of natural resource riches. For some, the gamble looks likely to pay off. Not all the oil companies will come up trumps. There will be unexpected delays, unforeseen expenses and problems with pipelines. But unlike five years ago, even the most cautious crystal gazer can now be sure that the Caspian will become a substantial oil and gas producer.

What that will mean for the area's geopolitics is less clear. Yesterday's concerns about Russian hegemony and surging Islamic fundamentalism may have faded, but new priorities have not yet crystallized. New economic and infrastructure links are being built in every direction. A generation hence, these links will surely have generated closer political ties with neighboring powers. China will be a bigger player in Central Asia, as will Iran. But will these be partnerships between prosperous, outward looking and independent countries, or will the Central Asians become client states?

Much depends on how they get on with each other. Today's rivalry and suspicion within the region do not bode well. It is discouraging, for instance, to see Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan strive for self-sufficiency in wheat rather than import it from grain-rich Kazakhstan. And if Armenia and Azerbaijan cannot compromise over Nagorno-Karabakh, there is little hope for a truly stable Caucasus. The fate of the region's immediate neighbors, will also make a difference. If Afghanistan's chaotic disintegration continues, a generation from now the country could cease to exist, its

ethnic groups divided among its neighbors. Uzbekistan, Iran and Pakistan.

Much depends, too, on how foreign powers use their influence. Although Russia is too weak to reconquer the region, it is strong enough to threaten its stability and jeopardize its prosperity. Even with new pipelines, Russia will retain considerable control over Central Asia's natural-resource exports, and the Russian military remains a force to be reckoned with. To flourish, the Caspian needs Russian commercial, strategic and military decisions informed by enlightened self-interest. Whether that can be achieved depends, in turn, on continued reform in Russia itself.

America, although too distant to exert dominant influence, is important enough to affect the options: witness the effect of its sanctions policy towards Iran. For much of the early 1900's America dismissed Central Asia as Russia's backyard. Now it views it mainly through the anti-Iranian prism. For the Caspian region, being a pawn in a bigger game is an invidious position to find itself in.

5. LEADERS AIM FOR FREE-TRADE ZONE

(Bruce Pannier, Central Asia: Leaders Aim for Free Trade Zone, *Radio Free Europe*, June 15, 2000. Abbas Djavadi, Iskander Aliev, and Salinijon Aioubov of the Tajik Service contributed to this report. Copyright © 2000, RFE/RL, Inc. Reprinted with the permission of radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 1201 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington DC 20036 http://www.rferl.org)

The presidents from the countries making up the Central Asian Economic Union met in the Tajik capital Dushanbe on June 14, 2000 to discuss the establishment of a free-trade zone in the region. They pledged to do so within two years.

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan formed the Central Asian Economic Union five years ago, and Tajikistan was admitted last year.

At the union summit in Dushanbe on June 14, the four presidents signed an agreement to establish a common economic space by the year 2002. Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev praised the agreement as the first of four steps that follow the European Community's path of development.

> This is the first stage on the road to forming a common labor market and capital market. You know our foundations when we began engineering a strategy of traditional development. We formulated four stages. The first is the formation of a free trade zone, the second is the customs union, the third – formation of a payments and monetary union and fourth – the formation of a common labor and capital market.

Tajik President Imomali Rakhnmonov, who was elected chairman of the union yesterday, explained at a press conference after the summit that the four countries intend to boost trade.

> The documents which we signed at the summit aim at the development of economic cooperation in deepening integration processes between the states of the Central Asian Economic Union.

According to Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbaev, the union or "economic community" is already a great success.

> By the way, this is the only union within the CIS which has its own bank: the Central Asian Development Bank, for which each state contributes its own share. This bank has $9 million and is carrying out 52 projects. Therefore, you could say that of all the unions that exist on the territory of the CIS, the most active – according to the figures – is our own union.

On some issues, the four presidents said they are seeking outside help. One is the Sarez Lake reservoir in Tajikistan. Formed by an earthquake in 1911, this accident of nature is now one of the most important reservoirs in Central Asia. But it has never been improved or re-enforced by humans. If another major earthquake hits the area, geologists fear the natural dam will break and gush torrents of water that could reach as far as Turkmenistan. If that were to happen, major agricultural areas would be washed away in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. The presidents appealed to the international community for help in shoring up the dam.

But it is military security that is uppermost on the minds of these four leaders. Uzbek President Islam

Karimov, whose country has seen a military buildup on the Afghan border, was the one who raised the issue.

> Today, Afghanistan has become a firing range where bandit groups are formed. Terrorist groups are created in camps where they are providing instruction. I want to emphasize, they are providing instruction, training terrorists. International terrorists from all sorts of groups are there. They prepare in camps from which they emerge to skillfully plant bombs, to skillfully murder, and skillfully carry out acts of sabotage.

Karimov has long warned of the dangers of having the Taliban as a neighbor. The Uzbek government has cracked down on suspected Islamic extremists several times in the last few years – only to witness, perhaps as a result of the crackdown, the rise of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Members of that movement are blamed for tying to kill Karimov last year and later invaded southern Kyrgyzstan from mountain bases in eastern Tajikistan.

Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan all agree that the movement has bases in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. Yesterday, the four presidents reiterated that they cannot cope with the problem alone. They called on the international community for help.

The regional security concerns were undoubtedly one reason for yesterday's hastily organized summit. It was the second time the four presidents met in less than two months – and ordinarily, these leaders seldom meet. In fact, Uzbek President Karimov and Kazakh President Nazarbaev never made official visits to Tajikistan until this week.

In an odd twist, the security threat may be giving new life to the economic union.

6. HEROIN AND NEEDLES: NEW COMMODITY ON THE SILK ROAD

(From Heroin and Needles: A Post-Soviet Ray of Hope By Douglas Frantz, in *NY Times*, October 16, 2000. Reprinted by permission.)

In the last five years, the problem of drug addiction has become so serious in Central Asia that prevention of drug use became secondary to precautions against drug-related diseases such as AIDS. The new Silk Road has become a crossroads on the drug trafficking route that lies from Afghanistan, Pakistan and China to western Europe. Carried back to the East are disposable needles – means of drug related AIDS prevention.

Bishkek, capital of Kyrgyzstan, seems an unlikely spot for heroin addicts, let alone something as reformist as a needle exchange. This country of 4.5 million is largely mountainous, and through decades of Soviet domination retained many of its nomadic traditions and tightly knit communities.

But heroin addiction has arrived all across Central Asia, the sad if predictable byproduct of the transformation — after the end of more rigid Communist control — of the ancient Great Silk Road into a major conduit for drug traffickers. United Nations experts estimate that 80 percent of Europe's heroin originates in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The principal route to market winds through the mountains and steppes of three former Soviet republics, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The influx of drug trafficking has strained the limited resources of the police, increased corruption and helped finance Islamic militants trying to destabilize the region. The new availability of heroin also expanded the number of addicts.

Heroin is cheap, plentiful and powerful. An average dose, about a tenth of a gram, costs $2 in Bishkek, half that in Osh, the major city in southern Kyrgyzstan where the supply is greater, and 50 cents in Tajikistan. In those poor Soviet republics, where average income rarely tops $600 a year, it has replaced its weaker cousin, opium, as the drug of choice. And it is far more addictive.

"Five years ago, we didn't see heroin," said Col. Zhanybek S. Bakiyev, the top drug enforcement officer with the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Internal Affairs. "Now we are concerned that our people consume heroin in greater quantities."

The number of intravenous drug users in Kyrgyzstan has increased fourfold in the last decade. Yet police and drug experts believe that the number is still small enough to avoid an epidemic. Tough enforcement is one means. But the police are also supporting an attempt to reduce the harm to addicts through needle-exchange programs.

"This is the moment when we should act," said Yuri Misnikov, an official with the United Nations Development Program in Bishkek.

The first needle exchanges opened last February in Bishkek and Osh. They are financed by the United Nations program and the Open Society Institute, part of the New York-based Soros Foundation. They were the first needle-exchange programs in Central Asia, though the Soros group has since opened two centers in Kazakhstan and plans one in Tajikistan soon.

The idea is simple and common in Europe and the United States. Addicts swap used needles and syringes for as many new ones as they need, usually five or six a day. Discarding used needles and not sharing them reduces the spread of the AIDS virus and diseases like hepatitis. At the exchanges, the addicts also get free medical care and blood tests.

Estebesova Batma, a psychiatrist who coordinates the program, said she expected 10 or 15 new clients a month when the two exchange offices opened here. Within weeks, more than 500 addicts were taking part and new clients were turned away because the program was running out of needles. About 180 people show up monthly at the Osh center.

The need was demonstrated by a survey of 100 clients in March. Ninety-six said they shared needles and 35 reported using the same syringe more than 20 times. One addict exchanged a syringe that had dangled from his belt on a key chain. Others turned in syringes used so often that the gauge marks had worn off and been replaced with notches to determine how much heroin to load in. One in five used tap water to wash needles and syringes before the next use and half did not know they could be infected by a needle.

The number of drug-related AIDS cases is surprisingly low. When the police announced two weeks ago that a heroin user who had been jailed had tested positive for AIDS, it was the first publicized case of a drug user contracting the disease in Bishkek, a city of about 650,000 residents, though experts say there are several others.

In addition, a study by the United Nations and the Soros Foundation found that between 11 percent and 18 percent of intravenous drug users in Bishkek are infected with H.I.V. and between 32 percent and 49 percent in Osh, where there are fewer education programs.

The news of the first drug-related AIDS case sent a chill through the drug-addict population. Two dozen friends of the jailed addict showed up the next day at Dr. Batma's two offices, asking for blood tests.

Among them were Sveta, Aleksandr and Yuri. All three are longtime drug users who switched from opium to heroin within the last three years. They agreed to be interviewed and photographed in Aleksandr's apartment as long as their last names were not used.

The apartment was on the second floor of a rundown building on the outskirts of Bishkek. Inside the paint was peeling and plumbing was exposed, but Aleksandr's wife, Olga, does not use drugs and tries to keep the place neat and clean for the sake of their two children.

Sveta, 35, said she started using drugs when she was 17. She said she stopped four times while using opium, once for three months. But she cannot stop using heroin. "We are scared to quit because we know that this withdrawal is waiting for us," she said, gesturing to her friends, too. "I would like to quit. I'm trying to reduce my use."

Aleksandr, who once made a good living as a driver despite his opium habit, has been unable to work since becoming addicted to heroin three years ago. He said he wants desperately to quit and emigrate to

Germany with his family to start a new life, but he cannot leave his heroin.

Despite the expressed desires to quit, the apartment crackled with anticipation as drug paraphernalia and a foil-wrapped packet of heroin are pulled out. They mixed the heroin in a plastic cup with boiled water and a powdered antihistamine that enhances the effect, and drew it equally into three syringes.

Aleksandr's 14-year-old daughter lingered in the hallway, ignoring the all-too-common scene. The two bottles into which Sveta deposits the used needles and syringes sat beside a bag filled with 30 or more new replacements.

Back at the clinic, Dr. Batma said exchanging needles is not enough. Heroin cannot be overcome without an extensive rehabilitation program. But there are none in Kyrgyzstan, where half the population lives below the poverty line and the national annual budget is only $300 million.

7. FEELING LOW, GETTING HIGH

(C. Iskander, Feeling Low, Getting Hing - Uzbekistan's Growing Drug Problem, *Field Reports, Central Asia and Caucasus Analyst*, September 27, 2000. Permission pending)

More and more Uzbek families are being torn apart by heroin use. "I pray to God and I know he will help!" says one haggard looking young woman, who seems to have aged years since we last met. Wiping away tears she tells me about the last two months since her husband started taking heroin. At first she stood by him and tried to help, but as he began selling off their furniture, she took her children and is staying with at his parents' place. Another friend tells me about her younger brother. The family won't let him in the house because he keeps trying to steal the few valuables they possess. He too has a drug habit to maintain.

An increasing number of men are turning to heroin in an epidemic few are willing to openly acknowledge. I still find it hard to appreciate the full extent of drug use around me. Families sitting outside their houses as the sun sets, sharing a melon together and beckoning neighbors to join them do not fit with my stereotype of an urban wasteland ravaged by drug use. A local recounts horrific stories of children as young as twelve already hardened heroin users. "I asked one girl why she took narcotics, such a young girl. She told me that as the youngest of eight from a poor family, she might as well enjoy life now. What was the point studying hard for years to get a job which pays five thousand *soom* a month ($8)?"

Opiates are not a new phenomena to Central Asia. They have been traded along the Silk Road for centuries. Curiously, opium was particularly popular among the wandering dervish pilgrims and a Khan of Khiva, who having outlawed alcohol, had quite a penchant for the poppy. Today, the Silk Road in narcotics is experiencing booming trade as Uzbekistan has become the main funnel for heroin from Afghanistan to Russia and then on to Europe. Islamic fundamentalists and Russian and Central Asian Mafia make for an unusual but extremely effective alliance.

Impoverished border guards and police are easily palmed off and many a taxi van driver will accept a few extra dollars to include a sack of 'flour' among his passengers, asking no questions. This huge influx of heroin has also led to a burgeoning domestic market, and whilst prices are a fraction of that paid in other countries, it still provides a lucrative income. Whilst Uzbek TV make a big show of penitent traffickers caught in the act, the reality is that the drugs epidemic is spiraling out of control. Everyone knows someone who is on drugs but there is virtually no public recognition of the problem. Such public recognition would allow for an awareness campaign to be launched or for drug rehabilitation centers to be opened. At this moment, families continue to struggle alone to help their drug dependent relatives. Some believe the best way to get friends and relatives off drugs is to lock them in an empty room for two weeks and pass food through a hatch. Even if this works, it will not face the reason many poverty stricken men are turning to heroin in the first place.

8. FOREIGN AID PROGRAMS AGAINST POVERTY IN KYRGYZSTAN

(By Douglas Frantz, A Chicken in Every Kyrgyzstan Pot, in *New York Times*, December 3, 2000. Reprinted by Permission)

Madi and Batkenl, Kyrgyzstan are situated in one of the poorest regions of the country. In the last two years, the United Nations has assigned workers to provide developmental assistance in the fields of agricultural and business development as well as public works. Many now dispute the impacts of such International Aid organization as the UN, and the World Bank on the poor counties. Not in support of either side, but merely to describe the situation, the following article is chosen to show two successful projects, conducted by the U.N.D.P. (United Nations Development Program). The first project is designed to provide small loans to people who seek opportunities to expand their agricultural activity and move their families and communities away from starvation. The second program that U.N.D.P. carries out in the region is investment in public works, in construction of a water pipe in particular. The projects unite local people of different ethnic and economic backgrounds to work together on common problems.

A Chicken in every Kyrgyzstan Pot

The food was heaped on a low wooden table: round loaves of unleavened bread, crisp apples and dried apricots, pickled vegetables, pots of black tea and bowls of a pungent fermented corn drink called *bozo*. The pride of the table belonged to a steaming stew of chicken and potatoes.

A dozen guests sat cross-legged on the floor eating, and the woman in the new green dress at the head of the table could not contain her joy. Her eyes sparkled and she broke into a wide grin, four front teeth of gold shining brightly.

A year ago, Minavar Salijanova and her family were close to starving. They lived in a three-room house of mud brick inherited from her parents, and the seven children had few clothes. Mrs. Salijanova could not even dream of owning a new green dress, let alone putting on a feast like the one she had now spread for neighbors and the visiting United Nations officials who helped her toward previously unimagined prosperity.

Sixty chickens roam the yard, vying for feed with five prized goats bought with money earned selling eggs for about 6 cents apiece in the nearby market. The children have new clothes, too, and Mrs. Salijanova hopes to buy a milk cow and a calf next month. And there is always chicken for stew.

Mrs. Salijanova and her family are among the beneficiaries of a United Nations program that, for the first time, is bringing microcredit — already widespread in parts of Asia and in Africa — to the former Soviet lands of Central Asia.

Eighty percent of Kyrgyzstan's 4.5 million people live on $2 a day or less. After decades isolated under Communism, with credit an alien concept, a few of the poorest villagers are learning the benefits brought by even small loans that their own banks and leaders are unable to furnish. In the process, their foreign benefactors hope, the villagers will acquire the skills needed to build not only businesses but also a society free of the old totalitarian ways.

"We're giving people hope for a better economic future and building grass-roots democracy as the basis for a full-fledged democracy," said Yuri Misnikov, a senior official with the United Nations Development Program in Kyrgyzstan.

The people of Kyrgyzstan were one of the great nomadic tribes of Central Asia, ranging across a region of valleys and snow-capped peaks dominated by two of the world's tallest mountain ranges, the Tien Shan in the northeast and the Pamir-Alai in the southwest.

For centuries, they lived in round skin tents known as yurts and raised sheep, goats and cattle. The territory was controlled successively by the Mongols, the Manchus, the Kokand khanate and the Russians. Islam was introduced in the 17th century, but its roots remain shallow. Soviet domination was established in 1919, and the country became independent in 1991.

Ancient maps date this village to the 13th century when it was a haven for people fleeing bitter mountain winters. The nomadic life is dead now, and Madi is the year-round home to 4,500 people who live in modest homes a few miles west of Osh, the second-largest city in this country the size of South Dakota.

Madi is one of 94 poor villages to which the United Nations dispatched workers over the last two years to help assemble anywhere from 6 to more than 20 inhabitants who received rudimentary business advice before submitting a written plan and a pledge to repay their loan, usually a few thousand dollars divided among the group, within a year.

The amounts sought are usually small — $10, $50 or maybe $100, to buy seeds or a goat or cow. The interest rate is steep, mandated at 32 percent by the World Bank, which provides the money. Still, officials say no one has failed to repay a loan.

So far, nearly 1,000 groups have been formed across southern Kyrgyzstan, with 6,500 members. Eighteen of those groups are in Madi and one of the members is Mrs. Salijanova, who until a year ago had never even thought about taking out a loan.

Her small house perches above a fast-running creek. A sturdy car can get within a hundred yards by traversing a deeply rutted road, but the family does not own a vehicle so they walk along the creek and climb the bank on steps fashioned from discarded tires.

The chickens have free run of the muddy yard and a roost inside a rickety structure with an open front. When a family member ventures forth to throw feed from a can, the chickens must compete with the pushy goats.

Last December, Mrs. Salijanova borrowed 5,000 som, about $100, to buy 60 chickens. Each day, the chickens produced 60 eggs, sold for three som apiece in the market in Osh. Every three months, Mrs. Salijanova bought more chickens, until her flock had grown to 147 birds.

Last August, she sold 60 chickens to buy shoes and clothes for her children and six grandchildren. In November, she repaid her debt a month early and applied for a new $300 loan to buy a cow and calf.

"The program has improved our vision for life," Mrs. Salijanova said. "Neighbors are seeing what we've done and they followed me to join the groups. The poorest people are still afraid of taking credit, but we will help them, too." Members of Mrs. Salijanova's group contribute to a fund that will provide interest-free small loans to the village's poorest people.

The program has spawned similar successes elsewhere, from people who have borrowed a few dollars to buy seeds to feed their families to those whose results have been more dramatic. A woman near Jalalabad got a loan to buy a cow, nicknamed "U.N.D.P.," and used the profits from its milk to purchase a small flour mill. It is her village's only mill and the profits enabled her family to buy a small house and a used car.

The Challenge of Scarce Drinking Water

About 100 miles west of Madi is the town of Batken, a center of unrest and instability. In 1999, four Japanese geologists in the area were kidnapped by Islamic insurgents and released after an undisclosed ransom was paid. Last summer, dozens of people were killed in clashes between the guerrillas and government troops.

It is one of the poorest regions of the country, where most inhabitants survive on subsistence agriculture and without clean water. Child mortality rates are extraordinarily high and many of the deaths are attributed diseases associated with dirty water; in the village of Check, just north of Batken, six children have died so far this year of such illnesses. Some of those who survive casually dip cups into a slow-moving drainage ditch for a drink as a woman washes dishes a few feet away.

On the outskirts of Check, however, 50 or 60 village men toil each day with shovels and picks to carve a two-mile ditch through the rocky soil and lay a pipe that will bring clean water from a well. Each of the village's 714 families is responsible for digging at least

six feet of ditch.

"In the old days, the government did this," Askar Umorov said as he paused from the hard work. "Now we are working for ourselves. We know how much work this is and we will maintain it for the good of the village."

The water pipe was planned by villagers brought together by another United Nations program which hands out grants for public works programs; the money is usually matched in kind by village labor.

Drinking water is the most pressing problem, but community groups are also rehabilitating decrepit schools, digging irrigation canals and stringing electric wires to remote villages.

Many villages in the program involve different ethnic groups — Kyrgyz, Tajiks and Uzbeks — working together to address common problems.

The other countries of Central Asia are run by former Soviet *apparatchiks* unlikely to embrace programs that shift power to villagers.

When a similar plan was discussed in Uzbekistan, officials rejected it out of hand, saying there was no poverty in the country, according to United Nations officials.

Local authorities in Kyrgyzstan were initially wary, too. But President Askar Akayev endorsed the concept as a way to help alleviate the country's widespread poverty. His enthusiasm has apparently trickled down as the projects succeeded.

9. WHAT THE *WTO* MEANS FOR XINJIANG

(Christopher M. Flemming, What WTO Means for Xinjiang, in *Central Asia and Caucasus Analyst*, December 6, 2000. Permission Pneding)

China will likely become a member of the WTO by 2001. In Xinjiang, during the five years following accession, the economic and political advantages of ethnic Hans, who make up 92% of China's population, and China's preferential policies toward the Han majority cities in consideration of WTO market liberalization, will further increase the economic and technological gap – as well as ethnic tensions – between Hans and Xinjiang's other ethnic groups. Advantages of the WTO will be minimally felt in Xinjiang during the five years following accession, but significant benefits may be realized after trade barriers have been phased out and if the region continues to make substantial steps toward a free market.

Background

China has cleared two major hurdles toward accession into the World Trade Organization (WTO). First it has begun its shift from a planned economy to a socialist market economy. Second, China has completed bilateral agreements with other WTO members—a requirement for accession. Entry into the WTO will be a step toward liberalizing the country's markets by gradually lifting many tariff and non-tariff barriers. In China's northwest autonomous region, Xinjiang, foreign investments are likely to continue in the cotton, food, infrastructure, oil and gas, and pharmaceuticals sectors. The region's wool, textile, and cotton industries will be forced to restructure in order to compete on the world market, resulting in either improved products and profits or inefficient industries due to protectionist policies.

Foreign investors will continue to be concentrated in north Xinjiang because that is the location of all the cities that China has targeted for Foreign Invested Enterprises (FIE) with incentives. Meanwhile, south Xinjiang, which is the most Uyghur-populated area of Xinjiang, will receive less attention. Therefore, an even larger gap will develop between Hans and other groups in Xinjiang in areas such as business knowledge, economic power, education, technology, and living standards in spite of likely improvements over current levels in most of these areas among Uyghurs and other minorities. Meanwhile, educated Hans and Uyghurs in Xinjiang fear the WTO.

Outside of Urumchi and other cities with more liberalized markets most Hans still adhere to Marxism, despite it being discredited in east China, and they

continue to see the world in the context of capitalism versus communism. These Hans are confused by their government's decision to join the WTO, and their fear is shared by Uyghurs in Xinjiang's more open cities. Uyghurs state that businesses run by Uyghurs will not be able to survive international competition and many Uyghurs will lose their jobs. They also fear that accession will fortify the current advantage held by Hans, who are able to buy a greater variety and better quality of goods and transport these goods from east China to Xinjiang, further edging out Uyghur businessmen. All of these sentiments reveal both a fear of China's policies toward Xinjiang to prepare for WTO accession and how far Xinjiang must come toward a market economy.

Implications

Both Beijing and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region governments' past economic policies toward Xinjiang have lagged behind those for east China, and this trend shows no sign of changing. Rhetoric by China's leaders suggesting that it is now time for east China to sacrifice its interests to promote west China, a reversal of past policies, lack credibility because following WTO accession, it is east China that will benefit by far the most. This said, probably the major benefit of the WTO for Xinjiang is that accession has acted like a catalyst for China's own attention toward developing Xinjiang. China is racing to strengthen its position in Xinjiang before the WTO requires international competition.

Another boost to Xinjiang's development because of the WTO is that with China's accession, Taiwan will also enter the WTO. This may be beneficial for Xinjiang because Taiwan is one of the region's major investors and accession of both China and Taiwan will mean that trade and investment barriers between the two must be reduced to WTO standards. Further Taiwanese investment in Xinjiang will likely enhance the region's infrastructure systems—increasing economic growth potential by making the region more economically integrated with the rest of China and Central Asia. However, it is likely that China will not fully open Xinjiang's markets until the latest date required during the five-year phase out period. During that time it will restructure industries, continue to build up infrastructure systems, and take other measures to prepare for market liberalization. Compared to east China, market liberalization in Xinjiang will likely be hindered by the region's leaders.

Xinjiang's leaders lack market economy experience, tend toward protecting local industries, and prioritize stability over economic reform. Therefore, Urumchi, Shihezi, and Kuitun, rather than Uyghur cities such as Kashgar, Ili, or Khotan, will be the focal points in the region for foreign businesses because of China's policy of targeting those cities for market liberalization under the WTO. Other cities will also benefit from joint ventures in service and distribution industries and some labor-intensive light industries, but to a much lower degree. Many foreign businesses that are not specifically targeting markets related to Xinjiang's wealth of natural resources or markets in Central Asia may find themselves asking what Xinjiang has to offer them that they cannot get in east China, where there is a better communication and transportation infrastructure, greater number of educated and experienced people, wealthier customers and freer markets.

Conclusion

China's accession will deepen the ethnic tension already salient in Xinjiang because of China's policy of developing Xinjiang by bringing more Hans into the region and targeting Han majority cities for market liberalization, along with the inevitable Han economic domination of the majority Uyghur region. But just as ethnic tensions will rise, minority nationalities that live in Xinjiang will also have conflicting feelings that it is in their interest to accept China's methods of preparing to compete within the WTO in order to improve their living standard. Therefore, barring instability caused by other factors, economic disaffection caused by entry into the WTO may not necessarily, in the near future, lead to ethnic violence in Xinjiang.

There is no doubt that the five years following accession will bring economic benefits as Xinjiang's markets are opened, but significant WTO-derived

benefits after those five years depend on the following: the degree to which business successes in east China lead to expansion westward; further improvements in all aspects of Xinjiang's infrastructure; the status of trade with, and stability in, Central Asian countries; equal access to economic opportunities for the region's non-Hans; removal of geographic restrictions for investment and businesses; and most importantly, how much future policies remove state intervention in the economy and liberalize the region's markets.

10. RICH SLICE OF SOVIET ASIA, LEFT TO A LONELY DESPAIR

(Douglas Frantz, Rich Slice of Soviet Asia, Left to a Lonely Despair, in *New York Times*, December 19, 2000. Permission pending.)

Conquerors have swept across Central Asia for 1,000 years. From the Huns and the Mongol armies of Genghis Khan to the Muslim potentates of Bokhara and Peter the Great of Russia, outsiders imposed their will and took their toll on the tribesmen in the mountains, valleys and plains known as Turkestan. Viewed from a distance, the 70 years of Soviet domination here seem to be one of the more peaceful episodes in the struggle for empire. But the landscape of Central Asia is littered with polluted rivers and ghost towns that belie the benign image. One such place is the town of Chkalovsk – a city in Tajikistan. The story of its economic devastation that resulted from the closing of a Soviet coal mine is described below.

At the first glance Shurab looks normal. Buildings appear well kept and children careen down a street on sleds. A close observer might wonder why the coal mine is idle at midday, but it is a minor clue.

Drive down the road into Shurab, however, and the reality is immediately apparent. Apartment buildings have been stripped, everything removed, from window glass to wiring. The railroad tracks to the mine are rusted and overgrown with weeds. City hall is padlocked.

Near the center of town, a restaurant looks as if it had been hit by a bomb. The roof is gone and there is no glass in the windows. The floor lies deep in rubble and an ornate column sprawls across the porch. Murals of dancing women in flowing dresses remain startlingly vibrant.

The desolation is ghostly and even the stragglers trying to tough it out add to the sad tableau. The children's sleds turn out to be just pieces of wood.

"We had a good life, with jobs and food and houses," Saparbai Abdullaev said as he stood on the high point outside town. Life indeed was once much better in Shurab. The mine churned out large quantities of coal, providing exports to industrialized regions of the Soviet Union and well-paying jobs.

He wore a traditional long quilted coat, a strip of cloth securing it to his thin, 77-year-old frame. His face was creased with age and grime and bad memories since the mine closed and his pension was trimmed to about $4 a month.

"No job, no land, no water, no hope," he said, summing up life in Shurab today.

Mr. Abdullaev said he and his wife were not the worst off among the people here. They have a house and family to help them. No, he said with a sad nod, the worst off are the ethnic Russians and Tatars brought to the area by Stalin's forced migrations to work in the mines. They had nowhere to turn for help.

"They stayed and sold everything to survive," he said. "They sold the spoons from their kitchens. They sold pieces of buildings and shops. Now they have nothing to sell."

He paused and peered down the road as if trying to will the town back to life, and said, "I cannot look at them without tears." And the tears began to flow into the creases of his face.

ENVIRONMENT

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1. OIL DISCOVERY THREATENS MONGOLIAN ANTELOPE

(CNN, *Oil Discovery Tthreatens Mongolian Antelope*, July 27, 1998. Permission pending.)

Wildlife experts are worried that the annual migration of an estimated 1 million antelopes across the grasslands of Mongolia could be threatened soon by the discovery of oil.

Several international oil companies already are extracting oil from the steppes, and plans for pipelines, roads and rail lines are under way.

The World Wildlife Fund launched a campaign to draw attention to the plight of the antelope.

"The oil discovery is a good thing for Mongolia, but the antelope are also important. If a pipeline is to be built, the technology is available to ensure they can raise it, or put in underground," said Chimed Ochir of the WWF Mongolian Project Office.

The antelopes' habitat is already threatened by heavy grazing. Half of Mongolia's population still herd livestock, increasing competition for space and water.

The WWF says the arrival of the oil firms could be the final blow for the antelope, but the companies disagree.

"There's no conflict at all. The Mongolian government, the people, the oil company and conservation will go hand-in-hand in this project and we will do our best to make the wildlife unspoiled," said Jerry Cotton, a site manager for the U.S.- based group SOCO.

The Mongolian government recently created three new nature reserves for the antelope. But officials, eager to attract foreign investment and hard currency, have not yet committed to protecting the antelopes' unique migration route – through the vast grasslands of the steppe.

2. CHANGING ATTITUDES OF PASTORAL PEOPLE

(Tsui Yenhu, *Attitudes of Pastoral People*, in *Culture and Environment in Inner Asia*, vol. 2, edited by Caroline Humphrey, Cambridge: White Horse Press, 1996, pp. 22-24. Reprinted with permission from the publisher. First published by the White Horse Press, Cambridge, UK.)

Many old people [in Mongolia] complain that the younger generation "has forgotten their traditions and has less respect for their culture than before." A teacher of Hoboksair, Xinjiang, says the following:

> Now, the younger generation of Mongolians are forgetting their traditional culture gradually, and they are shy in Mongolian culture. Before the 1960's, Mongolians avoided causing damage to ecology or polluting water sources, and they also respected the old generation. But [now] local people are losing all of the culture step by step.

It is possible that this is what is happening only in this area. However, in the past few years there has been an upsurge in Buryatia, Mongolia and Tuva towards the regaining or revitalizing of traditions, notably through the rediscovery of the functions of religions in local social and cultural life.

Other evidence of contradictory tendencies in attitudes towards the environment comes not from what people say, but from what they do. The data suggest that the number of violations of environmental laws has increased in the past few years. With modern transportation means being put more into use, and especially considered against the background that all the areas are developing their own market economy, we can say that this is bound to go on increasing. As a herder of Uvs, Mongolia explains:

> Illegal hunting is a well-known fact of life. For instance, last winter [1992] there was terrible illegal hunting in the *otor* pastures. The guilty people were arrested. It had been like a war with those people. They kill wild animals [wild goats] with automatic weapons. In general, there are very few specialized hunters [professional ones] but many illegal hunters. As a result, nature is being defied and many beautiful wild animals are in decline. In other words, their reproduction has been reduced [wild goats, deer, argali, etc.]

It is argued that the further diversification of the attitudes of the peoples in Inner Asia towards the environment in the contemporary context and future is not happening, or at least not mainly, because of traditional culture being lost. On the contrary, the process of revitalizing traditions in the areas is playing a positive role in regulating or reshaping the traditional attitudes: it occurs because of new surging economic motivations, at all levels, from the state down to regional, or even individual levels. Permanent, non-seasonal human migration, which has already started, especially in Xinjiang, will be accelerated and will certainly speed up exchanges of information about new ways of life. Whether this will further influence attitudes or not remains an open question.

Attitudes belong to a belief system that comprises the choice of a number of options on many issues; they are an important aspect of cultures wherever they exist. The attitudes to the environment of the pastoral population of Inner Asia, which this paper has attempted to classify and analyze, are changing, as the external world and the world in which they live are also changing. When people have more options in deciding their life patterns and belief systems, the correlation between conceptual attitudes and behavioral attitudes will change too. The traditional ones will certainly remain as a part of ethnic identity and as nostalgia, and new attitudes, behavioral ones in particular, will appear.

3. THE PRIDE OF GENGHIS KHAN FLIES ON

(John Pomfret, From Mongolia to Wales, the Pride of Genghis Khan Flies On, *Washington Post Foreign Service*, September 4, 2000. © 2000, The Washington Post. Reprinted with permission.)

Imagine Mongolia. In the rolling green grasslands of the sleepy North Asian countr, Eugene Popov clutched a majestic raptor with bulging gray eyes. It was a saker falcon, pride of Middle East sheiks, adored by Genghis Khan.

"A herdsman just walked over and gave it to us," Popov said, slightly nonplused, as he handled the bird with an expert's touch, his hands encased in kid gloves.

The herdsman had found the right man. Popov is a well-known ornithologist, and for the past few years he and other scientists have been working on a plan to save this majestic bird from extinction. The *saker* falcon, winch in ancient times ranged from the forests of East Asia to the Carpathian Mountains of Hungary, has vanished from Europe and most of Russia and is now found only in Mongolia, China, and parts of Siberia.

Popov and his colleagues from around the world have come to this verdant valley in Mongolia, where eagles nest in hillside forests and wolves prowl ravines, to ponder the result of their efforts. It looks like they've succeeded.

Good management, good science and a lot of help from the *saker* falcons have conspired to save this regal bird of prey. Today, Nick Fox, a well-known falcon breeder based half a world away from Mongolia, can confidently say: "There's no way they are under the peril of extinction."

Falcons, prized for their hunting skills, have been an obsession of Asian and Middle Eastern men for centuries. In the 13th century, Mongolia's great ruler, Genghis Khan, kept 500 falcons and 800 attendants for them. Last year, a sheik from Bahrain was caught trying to smuggle 19 falcons through Cairo's airport.

Moneyed Persian Gulf businessmen jet out with their favorite birds to the deserts of Pakistan each year to snare their preferred prey, the lesser MacQueen's buzzard. Its cooked flesh is said to be an aphrodisiac, and the bird has been hunted to extinction on the Arabian Peninsula.

Just a few years ago, a fine *saker* cost upwards of $20,000 on the black market, prompting the nickname "feathered cocaine."

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species bans the trade of *gyr* and peregrine falcons and severely restricts the export of *sakers*. Under the convention, Mongolia will export 61

falcons this year for $2,760 each. Separately, Mongolia signed a 10-year export contract with a Saudi prince in 1994 to buy 900 non-endangered falcons for $2 million.

Meanwhile, in the Welsh countryside, Fox, backed by finds from Middle Eastern bird lovers looking for a cheaper *saker,* started breeding them in captivity.

It has worked. In the wild, 75 percent of *sakers* die in their first autumn or winter. But in rural Wales, life isn't so harsh. Fox has had a roaring success at his National Avian Research Center Falcon Facility in the town of Carmarthen and, it turns out, *sakers* bred in captivity can hunt just as well as those from the wild. In some cases, Fox said, they're even better.

"We are hatching some tremendous birds," Fox said. "We've gotten some of our Middle Eastern friends to donate some amazing birds. We have the luxury of cross-breeding."

The Welsh institute is so successful that the price of a hot-rod *saker* has tumbled to less than $750 – a mere 3.7 percent of the top black market price. This is bound to affect Mongolia's export system, because they sell permits for more than $2,000, and it could also squash the black market trade.

"Mongolia's trade in exotic animals might take a little bit of a beating," Fox said, "but it's the *saker* that's going to win in the end."

4. A SOVIET SEA LIES DYING

(William S. Ellis, A Soviet Sea Lies Dying, in *National Geographic,* vol. 177: 2, February 1990, pp. 73-93. Reprinted by permission.)

In 1960, The Aral, straddling the borders of Kazakstan and Uzbekistan, was the world's fourth largest inland sea. Thirty years later, its level dropped by 16.5 metres, water volume has fallen by almost two thirds and salinity levels risen four-fold. Once abundant fish-stocks have all but disappeared, depriving local populations of their livelihood. The changes have also ravaged the unique ecosystem of the Aral Sea basin which is the natural regulator of the region's climate, and have turned the exposed sea-bed into a source of massive salt emissions that, carried by the wind, threaten not only the people's health but also the agriculture of every country in Central Asia. According to collected data, 75 to 150 million tons of salt and dust particles are swept off the dried sea bottom every day.

The rapid and extensive development of the cotton industry (known, ironically, as "white gold") along the two main rivers that feed the Sea – the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya – have been blamed for the crisis. Such were the requirements of Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, there were times when the flow of the flow of the two rivers practically ceased.

It has never happened before – within the time frame of a single generation, the disappearance of such a large body of water; but the former Soviet Union's Aral Sea, once larger in area than any of the Great Lakes save Superior, is vanishing from the face of the earth. As the waters continue to recede, final destruction of the Aral – 26,000 square miles in 1960 – could occur before another 30 years have passed.

The desiccation is taking place not only at a rapid pace but also with stealth, and in silence: the way a stallion plunges his muzzle into a bucket of water and drains it. Wide concern was late in coming and was delayed until now, when there is little that can be done to save the sea.

Before the emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev as the head of the Soviet government and his policy of *glasnost,* or openness, the calamity was not widely reported or even discussed in the Soviet Union. Rather, it was blurred to the public eye by the myopia of previous regimes. Ecology was not a primary concern. The well-being of a huge body of water sitting in the desert wastes of the Soviet Central Asian republics of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan was subordinate to the good of the state, to the successful fulfillment of plans and quotas.

And so it was decreed in 1918 that waters of the two great rivers feeding the Aral would be drawn off to irrigate millions of acres for cotton production. There

was a Soviet obsession to be self-sufficient in cotton. In 1937 the Soviet Union became a net exporter of what planners had come to refer to as "white gold." But the cost of that self-sufficiency and of export profits would be nothing less than one of the most extraordinary violations of the environment in modern times.

"I doubt if there has even been an environmental problem of this magnitude," said Philip P. Micklin, a leading authority on the Aral Sea and a professor of geography at Wester Michigan University. "Certainly as a regional problem affecting 35 million people, it is unprecedented."

For ten thousand years the Aral has drawn its life from those two rivers, the 1,578-mile-long Amu Darya and the 1,370-mile-long Syr Darya. In classical times they were called the Oxus and the Jaxartes, but by whatever name they are streams of strength and character, celebrated in verse and in the rich history of the times when Tatar horsemen rode the dry steppes.

The rivers come down from the mountain ranges to the southeast, flowing north to the Aral, and the routes they follow through deserts called the Kyzl Kum and Kara Kum are like lifelines to which millions cling. The waters of the rivers are given to melon patches and fields of cereal, but most of all to 90 percent of all the cotton grown in the Soviet Union.

Since the 1960's when the first symptoms of the problem appeared, the Aral has lost about 40 percent of its surface area, or nearly 11,000 square miles of what are now largely dry, salt-encrusted wastelands. At times the sunlight plays on the salt until all that once was the sea appears to be wrapped in lamé. And it stretches to infinity, leaving only the mind's eye to see it as it was, wide and clear and heavy with fish.

There has been time enough for some growth to have occurred on the dry seabed, but the sodium chloride and sodium sulfate that are too toxic for almost everything other than a small bushy plant called solianka. It has bright red flowers, and the contrast of the color with the setting is startling, like a blush on the gray cheeks of a corpse.

"The affects of the tragedy of the Aral Sea are being felt by everyone, from infants to old people," said Mels Kabulov. He is associated with a medical-research institute in Nukus. "As an example, there were 74 cases of throat cancer treated here in our clinic in 1959. Last year we had 366 cases, an increase of five times. The population, though, has increased only two and a half times during that period."

Dr. Kabulov said that traces of pesticides were first found in the breast milk of some area women in 1975 and that the number of such instances has continued to rise. "We are approaching a medical emergency."

Saving delta lakes and restoring some of those now lost could lead to new commercial fishing activity and to the restoration of animals such as the muskrat. The watery mazes once supported large populations of boar and deer. But most of the animals are gone now, even the egrets that applauded the show with great claps of wings.

There is still some talk of a grand scheme to bring new water to the Aral by a diversion from the Ob and Irtysh Rivers in Siberia, 1,500 miles away. Environmentalists in the Soviet Union, for the most part, are opposed to altering the rivers, saying that this can only compound environmental problems.

So the Aral continues to give itself to the sun and take little in return. Dr. Philip Micklin, Aral Sea expert, has looked beyond the year 2000 when, if nothing is done, the end for the sea will arrive.

"That does not mean there will be nothing left at all," he said. "The worst scenario would probably find the Aral shrunken to an area of 4,000 to 5,000 square kilometers as compared with the present 40,000 [15,500 square miles]. Two lakes would remain in the south, both four or five times as saline as the open ocean. Both would be dead, like, well the Dead Sea."

5. POISONED WATERS

(Fred Pearce, Poisoned Waters, in *New Scientist*, vol. 148: 2000, October 21, 1995, pp. 29-33. www.newscientist.com. Reprinted with permission of *New Scientist*.)

The mighty inland Aral sea lies stricken, caught in the grip of some evil chemistry as its waters dry to salt and blow away as noxious dust to strike the people with illness and death. The salinization of Central Asia that has resulted from the misuse of the region's water is worsening, threatening the lives of millions as well as the productivity of the region's crops. It is salt that is destroying the region's economy, ecology and health, says Jan Post, senior ecologist at the World Bank. Amid the rough scrub and sand dunes of the largest dustbowl in the whole of Asia, there are extensive saltpans, visible from the air as blinding white patches: Everywhere the salt is mixed with the residues of one of the most intense applications of farm chemicals attempted anywhere in the world.

Hollow-faced and emaciated, her head wrapped in a scarf, a woman shuffled along the grubby corridor of the Muynak fish cannery. She passed large Soviet paintings of heroic workers and grasped a handrail hard as she inched her way into the din of a Dickensian canning room oblivious to the scrum of journalists on the stairs. The journalists were attending an international conference on the Aral Sea being held in Karakalpakstan, a semi-independent republic of Uzbekistan. There, on the edge of the shrinking Aral Sea, women seemingly without the strength to lift their feet are a common sight.

The women are victims of an extraordinary pandemic of anaemia that has spread across the small republic in the past decade. The precise triggers for the anaemia, and a host of other diseases that afflict the majority of the republic's population, are not yet clear. However, the cause seems to lie with the disappearance of the Aral Sea and the ecological disaster following in its wake. "The water is to blame," says one local doctor. Today, the only drinking water available to most people is polluted drainage water full of salts and farm chemicals from irrigated fields. The food they eat has been ripened in the same water.

In addition, the collapse of the Aral Sea fishery in the early 1980's removed a major local source of protein. It also led to iodine deficiencies, which may have been responsible for brain diseases and mental retardation. Winter dust storms emanating from the exposed Aral Sea bed, which are on the increase, coincide with a winter peak in respiratory disease such as bronchitis. But the doctors in Karakalpakstan are in no doubt that polluted water supplies are primarily to blame, especially because similar data are emerging from other areas close to the Aral Sea, notably Kzyl-Orda province in Kazakhstan.

There is no doubt that the republic's water is heavily polluted. Almost every drop of drinking water first passes through the cotton fields of upstream states where large amounts of salts, mainly sodium chloride, and farm chemicals become concentrated in it. In recent years, the meager flow of water in the region's two main rivers, the Amudar'ya and Syrdar'ya, as they approach the Aral Sea has been almost entirely drainage water.

In the desert around the Aral Sea all life depends on the poisoned river water. People drink it. Their grapes, melons and vegetables soak it up. So do their cattle and sheep, and the few remaining fish, farmed in the polluted lagoons of the Amudar'ya delta.

"The salt content of the water is so high," says Ataniyazova, "that milk curdles in your tea. We have searched the scientific literature but we can find no research into a health situation like this."

Certainly the newly independent central Asian republics are already losing their addiction to cotton growing, preferring to convert some land to growing grains, which the Soviet system once required them to import. The area of land under cotton had fallen by 500,000 hectares since 1987, a reduction of around 10 percent. As a result, water use is starting to fall.

Meanwhile, the World Bank believes that once farmers are required to pay for their water, a policy already modestly launched in Uzbekistan, and once the state farms are broken up into family-size farm units, market incentives will encourage better use of

water and care for the land. But farmers, it says, cannot purge their lands of saltwater if there are no drains to remove the water – and that requires state investment.

Moreover, in the short term at least, farms will need more water – not less – to flush salt from their soils, says Post. "The trick is going to be to separate the good water from the bad water. And the best place for the bad water is in the old Aral Sea," he says.

6. WATER BECOMES A POLITICAL ISSUE

(Bruce Pannier, Water Becomes a Political Issue, *Radio Free Europe*, August 3, 2000. Sahmjon Aioubov and Iskander Aliev of the Tajik Service, Merhat Sharipzhan of the Kazakh Service, and Naryft Idinov of the Kyrgyz Service contributed to this report. (Copyright © 2000, RFE/RL, Inc. Reprinted with the permission of radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 1201 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington DC 20036 http://www.rferl.org)

Water in the region has served as a literal artery of life in Central Asia though centuries. It created comfortable oases for travelers on the Silk Road and has supported agriculture from the ancient times, during the Soviet rule, and continues to do so now in independent Central Asia. It seems that water literally does not know borders. But this year Central Asia is experiencing the worst drought in decades and political relations are drying up along with the crops, as the countries squabble over water rights.

The fields of southern Uzbekistan and southern and eastern Turkmenistan receive their water from rivers that flow out of the mountains of Tajikistan. Usually, the flow is ample for all three countries. But the current drought means that Tajikistan needs most of what passes through its territory first for itself.

Shukri Ahmed of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization said that the situation in Tajikistan is very grave and mentioned that there is a 46 to 47 percent decline in cereal output this year compared to last year. And last year itself was a very bad year.

There are two major rivers in the region – the Amu-Darya and the Syr-Darya. The Syr-Darya originates in Kyrgyzstan, then weaves in and out of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan on its way to the Aral Sea. The Amu-Darya originates in Tajikistan and then forms the Uzbek-Afghan border until it turns north, sometimes forming and sometimes crossing back and forth along the Turkmen-Uzbek border as it travels to the Aral Sea.

A system of reservoirs, built in the Soviet era, helps provide a steady flow for these two rivers. The system was designed with regional needs in mind. But today, the system provides water to five separate countries, not five states within one country.

Last year, Kyrgyzstan for the first time used water as a political tool. It demanded compensation for maintaining the reservoirs on the Syr-Darya. Kazakhstan, for example, was asked for shipments of coal to keep northern Kyrgyzstan warm and productive in the winter. When Kazakhstan did not ship the coal, Kyrgyzstan closed off the reservoirs that release water to Kazakhstan. The pressure worked; the bill was paid.

The same tactics are coming into play this year as well, but two countries, not one, are using them. Uzbekistan has cut water supplies to Kazakhstan, citing non-payment of debt. Kazakhstan retaliated by shutting off the Soviet-era telephone lines in Kazakhstan that lead into and out of Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan's callers must now use newer and much more expensive phone lines recently installed by Western companies to call anywhere north of Kazakhstan.

In desperation, Kazakhstan sent a delegation to Tajilkstan to ask the Tajik government to release more water into the Amu-Darya for Uzbekistan, so that the Uzbek government would be able to release more water from the Syr-Darya into Kazakhstan.

In an extremely generous gesture – given the country's situation – Tajikistan has agreed to give more water to Uzbekistan, although there is no evidence it has provided any water to Kazakhstan. Tajik Deputy Minister of Water Resources Vohid Shefiev said the

decision will be hard on the Tajik people but could benefit them later this year. "Although we ourselves are experiencing a shortage of water, we decided to supply Uzbekistan with water and we expect that our neighbor will help us with electricity in the winter."

That decision not only leaves less water for Tajikistan's fields, it also reduces the level of water in the Nurek Hydro-Electric Dam by 12 meters. That means less power for a large part of Tajikistan.

Other water squabbles further complicate the situation. Kazakhstan is rethinking an agreement nearly closed with neighbor China last year. As China's oil business expands westward toward Kazakhstan, millions of new workers are expected in the area. To meet their needs, China plans to redirect some water from the Ertis (Irtysh) River, which flows into Kazakhstan.

That plan raises eyebrows in Kazakhstan. Kazakh Ecology Minister Serikbek Daukeyev says China's work on its part of the Ertis has lowered the water level in Kazakhstan's part. Daukeyev said the drinking water in the country's industrial northeast could be affected.

There is also an ownership dispute over a reservoir located on or near the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border, depending on which country's officials are speaking. There are reports local officials in border regions are using water to extract goods, often badly needed, from neighboring farmers on the other side of the border. Stories circulate of incoming traffic being stopped at border check points until more water is released.

Specialists on the region have predicted for years now that these new countries would come into conflict over water. Reliable figures for the region's population 100 years ago are difficult to find. But the population today is probably five times what it was at the start of the last century. The consumption of water is killing the Aral Sea, now about half its size a century ago.

And a cycle of drought can often last years, which means the worst may be yet to come. The FAO-WFP mission warned that half of Tajikistan's people are looking at hunger if the situation does not change. That may be a warning to all the countries in the region.

7. THE FATE OF EASTERN KAZAKHSTAN

(Patrick Conway, Kazakhstan: Land of Opportunity, in *Current History*, vol 93: 582, April 1994, p. 166. Reprinted with permission from *Current History* (vol 93: 582, April 1994). Copyright 1994, Current History, Inc.)

Extreme environmental degradation was the final legacy the Soviet Union bequeathed to regions of Kazakhstan and its Central Asian neighbors. The aftereffects of nuclear testing serve as one extreme example.

In 1949 the Soviet government selected the region around the city of Semipalatinsk in eastern Kazakhstan as the site for the research, development, and testing of nuclear weapons. Between 1949 and 1962 nearly 200 nuclear weapons were detonated in the skies above Semipalatinsk. After 1962, nearly 400 nuclear detonations took place in underground chambers. This was not a desolate area: hundreds of thousands of people lived within a 50-mile radius of the test sites. The consequences of this sustained exposure to radiation are evident in the region. Genetic abnormalities are common, as are babies born with severe neurological and physical defects. Leukemia also is widespread.

The underground nuclear testing conducted in February 1989 led to the formation of Kazakhstan's first modern independent political movement. Olzhas Suleimenov, a writer and geologist, was the first to speak openly of the tests. Five thousand people responded to his call to a public meeting, and from that core the Nevada-Semipalatinsk Movement was born. It proved quite successful in combating nuclear testing in Kazakhstan. For example, the Supreme Soviet of Kazakhstan, under strong pressure from supporters of the movement turned down an offer in mid-1991 from the Soviet government that would have given the republic 5.1 billion rubles in exchange for the right to conduct two more underground nuclear tests. In

August 1991 President Nazarbayev ordered the complex at Semipalatinsk closed. Its legacy, however, has penetrated the people of Kazakhstan to their marrow.

8. THE NUCLEAR DESERT OF *LOP NOR*

(*The Consequences of Nuclear Tests in Eastern Turkestan.* From http://wwww.caccp.org/et/cnt.html. Reprinted by permission from the Eastern Turkestan Union in Europe © 2000)

China's nuclear tests in Eastern Turkestan (the formerly independent Chinese Province of Xinjiang) for more than three decades have produced an ecological disaster, not only endangering human life but also polluting drinking water, food supplies and affecting millions of animals throughout the country. There are no official figures on the nuclear victims in Eastern Turkestan, but it has been reported that more than 200,000 people in Eastern Turkestan have died because of nuclear fallout.

Radioactive fallout from the nuclear testing site at Lop Nor is causing an increase in human cancer. It has been reported that ten percent of the population are ill with cancer in that country. Before the nuclear tests the rate of cancer mortality in Eastern Turkestan was rather low. According to the reports between 1975 and 1985 the rate of leukemia increased 7 times in comparison with the previous ten years. The rate of mortality from oesophagos cancer is 7-8 times higher than that of the rest of China. Almost 40 percent of adults suffer from various forms of nervous disorder while 70 percent of women have pathology which provoke complications during pregnancy and birth. Seventy percent of women suffer from vaginal cancer. And 85 percent of the population suffer from leucopenia.

As a result, babies with horrible deformities are born, for example, two-headed, without kidneys, mentally retarded, and even mutants who cannot be recognized as human beings. It has also been reported that during February and March 1987, almost 800 Uighurs died in the cities of Lop, Charkalik, Oherchen, Keriya, Chira and Hoten of an unidentified disease. The same kind of deaths have been reported in other parts of Eastern Turkestan. The World Health Organization said in a report released in 1988, that 3,961 people died in the cities of Hoten, Yarkent and Kashgar of an unknown disease. According to the reports in July and August, 1990, in the surroundings of Kashgar over 5,000 youth's arms and feet were paralyzed and lost their eyesight. 160 kids born in the city of Chatan in August 1991, had cataracts in their eyes.

Most importantly, the polluted districts bordering the nuclear test site did not even receive elementary medical treatment the report said. Doctors rushed to the areas to check the victims were forced lie to the people about their deadly illness.

During the more than 30 years of nuclear testing in Eastern Turkestan, no medical investigations were carried out.

Moreover, at the beginning of the nuclear tests, the people living in the immediate areas of Lop Nor were never evacuated. In later stages, when they were evacuated, they were returned only after a few days to the polluted areas. Animals were never evacuated. Those who came back ate their meat and drank their milk.

The peaceful demonstrations of the peoples of Eastern Turkestan living at home and abroad demanding the closure of the nuclear site have so far received no results.

9. SITTING ON A PILE OF URANIUM

(Douglas Frantz, Rich Slice of Soviet Asia, Left to a Lonely Despair, in *New York Times*, December 19, 2000. Permission pending.)

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, many large industrial facilities mostly in peripheral states were shut down due to the lack of productivity, infrastructure, or simply lack of demand. One of many such instances was a uranium-processing plant in Chkalovsk – a city in Tajikistan. Not only did the city, its people and infrastructure suffer economially, losing the major production facility in the area, but the area is now

devastated environmentally. All the poisonous wastes from the plant were left behind, now slowly destroying the health of all the people living in the town and the neighborhood.

For nearly half a century, Chkalovsk was a closed city, part of the Soviet military-industrial complex tucked away in the northwest corner of Tajikistan. Lavrenti Beria, the Soviet secret police chief, established a uranium-processing plant near the city in the 1940's, and it brought skilled workers and prosperity.

It was one of many places developed or expanded during the Soviet era to exploit gold, uranium, coal, tungsten and other natural resources.

Vast stretches of arid land in the southern part of the country were turned into collective farms laced with irrigation to grow cotton.

When Communism collapsed, so did the economy and stability of Tajikistan. From 1992 to 1997, the country was embroiled in civil war. Its economic recovery has been slow, leaving it the poorest of the 15 former Soviet republics.

For Chkalovsk, the end of Communism meant piles of uranium waste, buried under a few feet of soil in places where young shepherds now graze flocks of sheep and goats. Traces of radioactivity have been found in meat sold in local markets, say professors at Khujand State University, just northwest of Chkalovsk, and the impact will be felt for decades.

TEACHER BACKGROUND READINGS

NOTE: *Although the following several pieces are chosen as background information for teachers, they can also be used very effectively as introductory or summary readings for students.*

1. CENTRAL ASIA IMAGINED GEOGRAPHICALLY

(R. D. McChesney, *Central Asia: Foundations of Change*, Princeton: The Darwin Press, Inc., 1997, Chapter IV: Central Asia Imagined Geographically. Permission pending.)

Geographers seem less tied to preconceptions – they ask questions about man's relationship to the natural environment, about spacial distributions of human settlements and about the spaces and transitional zones between human settlements. Like anthropologists they raise universal questions that relate conditions in Central Asia to other parts of the world.

In the world imagined by classical and medieval geographers, Central Asia was situated in the fourth and fifth climes (lateral bands stretching across the known inhabited world). The fourth clime, in the middle of the seven of the system, was a region of temperateness and moderation, particularly suited to human habitation. But satellite and space shuttle photography help us understand some of the constraints on human population in a different fashion from our predecessors. As viewed from space, we see the Caspian Sea to the west and the Iranian deserts to the southwest as natural, easily surmountable limits. The Hindu Kush Mountains to the south and southeast and the Tien Shan to the east and northeast are more formidable. From space, the area appears wide only at the north, with the steppe lands stretching eastward from the Don and Volga Basins. Within this frame, the vast majority of the surface area is desert lowland. From the Aral Sea south of the steppe, more than 3/4 of all the land area is desert. Here are two great sand deserts, the Kara Kum (Black Sand), lying south of the Aral Sea between the Caspian and the Amu River; and the Kizil Kum (Red Sand) stretching from the Aral Sea to the Tien Shan. These mountain ranges contain enormous and accessible reserves of water because of the annual snowpack and permanent glaciers at the higher elevations and they have supplied water to the lowland oases for millennia. In certain areas it is possible to grow cereal grains in the valleys and the lower slopes of the mountains without irrigation, but fruits and vegetables and cotton require it.

Mountains and Rivers

The mountains supply the water for two major river systems and several large secondary ones. These, in turn, have been for centuries the basis of large-scale irrigation systems and thus of human civilization. At the northeast end of the Tien Shan range is the Jungarian Gate, which divides Inner Asia from Central Asia – a narrow slot separating the Mongolian mountains from the Tien Shan. This corridor has historically given access to the oases of Central Asia for the caravan trade and for Inner Asian people on the move – the Huns and the Mongols. The Tien Shan range which extends southward forms the border between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and China. (The range is a vast store of fresh water.)

There are three major mountain ranges: (a) the Tien Shan in the region of present day Tajikistan; (b) the Kunlun and Karakorum which branch off to the east; (c) Hindu Kush which forms the southern border of Central Asia and, eventually, slopes away to the west where the ranges merge with the Iranian plateau. Between the ranges lie the river systems that deliver the water stored in the mountains to the oases of Khojent, Saranqand, Shahr-i-Sabz, Karminah and Herat and the great oases at their termini – Balkh, Bukhara, Merv, Khiva and Tashkent. These ranges and river systems generate the two great rivers of Central Asia, the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya, also known as the Oxus (Jayhun) and the Jaxartes (Sayhun).

- The Amu defines Afghanistan's borders with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Along its course it is fed by several major secondary

rivers which water significant areas before emptying into the Amu. For its last 150 kilometers, it forms a large delta, once carrying more sediment than any other river in the world but damming and irrigation has reduced that flow and very little water now reaches the final outfall, the Aral Sea. As a consequence, the Aral Sea is drying up and the lower reaches of the river, all in Uzbekistan, receive less and less water.

- The Syr flows into the Farghanah Basin, most of which lies in Uzbekistan, then continues westward to Tajikistan before re-entering Uzbekistan. For its final 900 kilometers, the Syr flows towards the Aral Sea within Kazakhstan where its waters are entirely consumed before it reaches the Aral.

- There are a number of important rivers in Central Asia that terminate in oases.

- The picture that emerges from a study of the physical geography helps explain the antiquity of the region's urban sites, the unchanging nature of the lines of communication, and the constraints on urban and agricultural expansion. Physical geography has also had a major impact on political geography. When the borders of the Soviet Union were delineated in the 1920's, the nationality issue rather than geography was uppermost in the minds of those responsible and the policymakers seemed to be oblivious to the potential conflict over water. Since 1991, formerly domestic water disputes have become international ones... It has been estimated that over 90% of all surface water resources in the former Soviet republics is contained within the Syr and Amu river systems, creating a greater potential for conflict where there is no longer a single central authority setting policy on water use.

These are some of the realities of the Central Asian landscape. But these realities can also be viewed through the lens of the human imagination, which interprets such realities in various ways... How the imagination shapes it helps shape the course of human action – conflict or compromise, domination or submission, exploitation or conservation.

2. GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF CHINA AND INNER ASIA

(Reprinted by permission of the publisher from *Imperial China: 900-1800* by F. W. Mote, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Copyright © 1999, by F. W. Mote, PP. 23 - 30.)

Historians increasingly agree in using "Central Asia" to designate the regions known in the past as Sogdiana, Bactria, Transoxiana, Fergana and the like. Transoxiana is called that because Alexander the Great crossed the Oxus River in 327 B.C. In his eastward campaign; the area "across the Oxus" was then the ancient kingdom of Sogdiana. Loosely, "Central Asia" means to us today the northern portion of modern Afghanistan and the adjoining regions of the former USSR along the Amy Darya (i.e., the ancient Oxus) and the Syr Darya (i.e. the Jaxartes) rivers, lying to the west of the Pamir Mountains and to the east of the Caspian Sea... During much of China's imperial age that region was the home of flourishing Turkic city-states including Bokhara, Balkh, Merv, Samarkand and others with similarly evocative historical associations.

"Inner Asia," in distinction to "Central Asia," is used here to designate the vast region east of the Pamirs and extending all the way to the Pacific Ocean. It includes Tibet and Xinjiang in the west, north of China proper from the latitude of China's Great Wall all the way to but not including the Siberian forests and tundra, and east to the Pacific coast. Inner Asia is thus defined as the "interior" of East Asia, whether seen from Russian Siberia or from China. From the Pamirs east to Vladivostok is a distance of 3,000 miles; from south to north Inner Asia incorporates a band 1,000 or more miles wide. The core of Inner Asia consists of the regions known, from west to east, as Tibet, Chinese Turkestan or Xinjiang (Sinkiang), Inner and Outer Mongolia, and Manchuria (which the Chinese call "the Northeast," Dongbei). Inner Asia also includes areas of the former USSR east of the Pamirs inhabited today largely by Turkic and Mongolian peoples of the Russian steppe, just to the north of Chinese Turkestan and the Mongolian Republic.

If we include a part of the historical Tibet the Chinese-Tibetan upland comprising the western Chinese border province of Qinghai (or Kokonor) and the former province of Xikang, now largely absorbed into the larger boundaries of China's Sichuan Province, the entire area of Inner Asia is well over 4 million square miles in extent.

About 2 million square miles of that is within the boundaries of China today; by comparison, the area of "China Proper," or "China inside the Wall," is about 1.8 million square miles.

At its southern and western edges, Inner Asia enfold's Asia's loftiest and most forbidding mountains, the Himalayas and the Pamirs. To the north and east of these great barriers, three mountain chains split off and run to the east, entending into China and Inner Asia for a thousand miles or more; the Kunlun Mountains divide Tibet from Xinjiang; the Tian Shan Range divides Xinjiang into two vast basins, the Tarim Basin on the south and the Dzungaria basin to the north; and, farther north, the Altai Range divides Xinjiang from Mongolia.

South of the Tian Shan Range, the huge Tarim Basin extends a thousand miles from Kashgar and Yarkland to the west to Hami and Dunhuang in the east, on the edges of China Proper. Most of it is an immense, uninhabited wasteland known as the Takla Makan, a desert of legendary harshness and danger, yet crossed by the fabled Silk Roads connecting China to western Asia. The most important of those routes ran across its northern rim, "island-hopping" from one oasis to the next. Dzungaria, to the north of the Tian Shan, is mostly rolling steppe, and especially at its eastern end it is deep in summer grass on which herds fatten. It is not desert, yet like the Takla Makan to its south, it is subject to extremes of heat and cold and to fierce winter winds. Mongolia, today divided into Inner Mongolia (an administrative region of China) and Outer Mongolia (more correctly, the Republic of Mongolia, recently independent after long being subject to domination by the USSR), lies north and east of the Altai Range. Mongolia is a flatter plateau mostly between 3,000 and 5,000 feet in elevation. That great Mongolian heartland (the Mongol khanate's "hearthland") enfolds vast deserts – the Gobi, the Ordos, and the Alashan – within its southern and western boundaries, but has grassy steppelands farther north and east. The farther east one goes in Mongolia, the more reliable are the rainfall and the grass, but trees are few and forests unknown. Still farther east, beyond the Greater Khingan (Da Xing'an) Mountains in Chahar, just north of Beijing, one crosses into Manchuria, with its rich plains and valleys and, still farther north, its deep forests.

Southern Manchuria was, intermittently, administratively part of China as early as the beginnings of the imperial era, and remained so off and on until the eighth century. Thereafter, its remaining Chinese population was concentrated in the southwestern coastal zone. Except for that narrow zone, Manchuria did not acquire a large Chinese population until nineteenth-century migrations from North China occurred. Not counting that newly populated segment of Inner Asia, the entire core area of Inner Asia, from the Amur River west to the Pamirs, held a population of only about 12 million in the early decades of the twentieth century, when China Proper had a population of around 500 million. In the tenth century China had a population of perhaps 80 million (then a third of the world's population), whereas all of the Inner Asian core area held about 5 million people divided into a very large number of nations and tribal groupings. That is necessarily a rough estimate but it cannot be far wrong. The Khitan population in the tenth century has been carefully estimated to have been less than 1 million. The Mongol population in areas subject to the Yuan dynasty's rule in the late thirteenth century, probably more than half the Mongol population at that time, might be roughly estimated at one-half millions. Figures for the Tibetan and Jurchen populations in the twelfth century are not reliable enough to cite even in rough estimate, but could not have been much larger than the estimates for the Mongol and Khitan populations offered here. In short, we cannot know for certain the population of Inner Asia at any point in the span of history covered by this volume, but we can be quite secure in describing the area as one of sparsest habitation, of immense empty distances, with climate often ranging from harsh to worse, conditions testing to the full the toughness and adaptability of its inhabitants, and of all who traveled or campaigned across it.

Yet there were and are rich oases in Xinjiang, favored islands of commerce and agriculture set in the desert sea, often constituting city-states of some importance. The cities and their surrounding oases were links in the chain of supply stations sustaining the caravan routes stretching west from China that crossed

the Pamirs, and in a tenuous way linked East Asia to the farther shores of sedentary life in India and Persia and farther west, even to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Apart from these important oasis city-states, there were in the tenth century few cities of size and importance in all the rest of Inner Asia. To be sure, three of the five Liao dynasty capitals built early in the tenth century lay north of the Great Wall line (then a line of defended passes, not a continuous wall). Those capital cities, however, were populated by forced migrants, mostly Chinese from the southern coastal rim of Manchuria or North China. Except for the sedentary inhabitants of the oases, the other Inner Asian peoples themselves were not city dwellers.

Agriculture was intensively practiced in the fertile oases of Chinese Turkestan scattered across the Tarim and Dzungaria basins. Some of those were several hundred square miles in extent. They depended on irrigation from short rivers that descended from the mountain ranges; as they flowed farther from their sources in the high mountains, those rivers disappeared in the sands. The agrarian inhabitants were primarily Turkic; some were literate peoples of quite advanced civilizations with strong cultural ties both to China and to places farther west, in Central Asia. Farther east, throughout most of Mongolia agriculture was scarcely possible because the rainfall averages only from three to ten inches a year. Farther on, to the east of the Khingan Mountains in Manchuria, however, the rainfall is a reliable twenty to thirty or more inches a year. The Liao, the Jin, and the Qing dynasties all originated there, among peoples – the Khitans, the Jurchens, and the Manchus – who could easily have practiced agriculture, and sometimes did, but who in their rise from local tribal leadership to military overlordship of enlarged territories, in preparation for conquest, found it advantageous to identify with the potent pattern of militarized steppe nomadism.

Pastoral nomadism appeared in the Inner Asian region perhaps no more than 2,000 years ago. Anthropologists and historians no longer subscribe to theories that saw nomadism as a primitive stage in the development of all mankind, following the stage of hunter-gatherers, and to be followed inevitably by the more advanced stage of sedentary agriculture. Even though Stone Age man everywhere appears to have been nomadic in the sense of wandering about in search of food, pastoral nomadism as it developed in Inner Asia (and some other parts of the world) is quite different. It is an advanced form of social organization, the preference of people whose forebears probably had practiced agriculture, perhaps in regions of quite limited or marginal productivity along the shores of the Inner Asian desert "sea." To those reluctant agriculturalists the alternative of nomadism offered more than did the hard life of growing wheat or millet in arid regions. The Inner Asian core area offered conditions that permitted the highest development of the potential in nomadism, sustained by its wandering herds of cattle and sheep and the use of camels and horses for transport or for war. Only under conditions which to them represented failure would those nomads settle down in one place long enough to scratch out and harvest a summer's crop. They looked with scorn on farmers, and though dependent on neighboring farming peoples for grain, iron, textiles, and other essentials, they much preferred to acquire those by raiding or coercive exploitation. Agriculturalists and nomads thus coexisted in an unbalanced symbiosis, nomads needing items that only stable agricultural communities could provide, while their sedentary neighbors needed nothing from the nomads, yet could not evade their demands. The rich oases were most vulnerable to raids and conquest, and could be forced to provision the first phases of nomadic state development. But beyond that, the scale of their economic support to nomadic power buildups was limited.

Later imperial China is a period of China's and Inner Asia's profound impact on each other. The impact was mutual: it worked in both directions. The historian, however, must write the history of this period primarily from the Chinese record. For these as for most centuries it is the Chinese record that provides the fullest and most factual account of all things affecting China. True, that impressive record distorts events involving non-Chinese peoples by perceiving them as occurring on the periphery of the world's only civilization. For, while not always well informed about other peoples or necessarily unsympathetic to them as fellow human beings, the

Chinese nonetheless have disparaged them as people not yet fully within the boundaries of civilized – that is, of Chinese – life. The modern reader may not feel full affinity with that arrogant (even if understandable) prejudice. Yet similar attitudes are familiar in many national histories and are not unknown in our own.

Chinese still have difficulty coming to terms with the long period of invasion and alien domination that began with the Liao dynasty early in the tenth century. Like the ancient Greeks, the Chinese of the past designated peoples who did not use their language and share their cultural values "barbarians." Nevertheless, in recent decades, under ideological imperatives of our time, modern Chinese in China have reversed that narrow view, but only to adopt or retroactively co-opt all the non-Chinese aliens, including those who dominated this period, now classing them as their "non-Han but Chinese" junior partners in the growth of a multiethnic Chinese nation. If this view suits certain modern Chinese political or psychological needs, it is nevertheless strikingly ahistorical, and somewhat disturbing in its patronizing attitude toward peoples who thought of themselves as fiercely independent, and as possessors of cultures having their own integrity despite interactions and influences derived from the Chinese edge of their world.

Most modern Chinese historians continue, much like their predecessors throughout several millennia, to accept the preeminence of Chinese cultural values in all periods of East and Inner Asian history. Their arguments can be impressive, if ultimately not convincing to all of their neighboring peoples. "Objectivity" in such matters is difficult to achieve. To repeat, we are perforce almost completely dependent on Chinese sources, and very largely on modern Chinese scholarship, with all the past and present biases and subjective cultural attitudes they embody. Yet there are many Chinese as well as other historians of today who strive to escape the limitations implicit in that circumstance. In this work, difficult though it is given the sources, I shall endeavor to establish a distinct point of view.

When the Inner Asian chieftains scanned their horizons, there were many targets of military expansion to tempt their ambitious warriors. But beyond all the others, China was the great prize, for plunder and for more long-range exploitation. The paramount challenge to Inner Asian tribal peoples in those middle centuries of China's imperial age was to create confederations that could aggregate large enough armies, organized on the supremely efficient steppe nomad model, so that they could prevail over at least a portion of the Chinese nation. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Mongols carried that development to its ultimate heights and conquered not only all of China but all of Central and West Asia and much of Russia as well.

The Mongols' success in conquest is unmatched in history, yet even before them the organization of entire tribal societies for mobility, and the honing of each of their member's skills for warfare, had reached impressive levels of success among their Turkic predecessors. The Kirghiz, the Khazars, and the Oghuz Turks, the Kipchaks and Kumans, and other Turkic-speaking predecessors of the Mongols, all of whom appear to have originated in eastern Inner Asia, began to extend their empires to the west no later than the sixth century C.E. The khanate of the Western Turks controlled most of Central Asia in the sixth century, and at the same time the Khazars, whose language was almost certainly Turkic, and whose rulers converted to Judaism in 740 C.E., had controlled the regions from the northern shores of the Caspian westward into the Ukraine from the sixth century onward. We thus see that the westward spread of Turkic peoples, some reaching as far as Byzantium and eastern Europe, had long preceded the westward expansion of the Mongols in the thirteenth century.

Others moved into the central parts of Inner Asia that we now call Mongolia and created their conquest dynasties in symbiosis with China. The Tangut Xi Xia, whose roots were in the Tibetan uplands of Northwest China, and the Khitan Liao from the Northeast (Manchuria), illustrate the variety of linkages that could be created between advanced nomadism and the Chinese culture area in the tenth century. The Jurchens, the Mongols, and later the Manchus offered further variations on this theme. During the thirteenth century, steppe history fully merged with the mainstream of

Chinese history in the Mongol conquest of the entire Chinese culture area and the establishment there of their Yuan dynasty.

That long span of time, roughly half a millennium from the rise of the Khitans to the end of the Mongol Yuan dynasty, was a period of profound changes in Chinese civilization, and of even more remarkable changes in the civilizations and the political organizations of the Inner Asian nations which created the conquest dynasties. Northern tribal states and Chinese dynasties lived in close, continuous interaction. An account of the Inner Asian states is thus properly central to this account of Chinese history. That is not to deny that the Inner Asian civilizations also have their own integral histories, histories that deserve to be narrated from the point of view of their own states and cultures, and in full consideration of all their other boundaries and their further relations with other nations. They need not be examined only from the point of view of their place in Chinese history. But this is a history of China, "China" signifying here, as it has historically, an account of the (Han) Chinese people and of their distinctive civilization.

3. ASIA IN WESTERN AND WORLD HISTORY

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I. Nomadic Migration in the Eurasian Steppes

Early Nomadization

Before 2000 B.C.E. there were only small areas of cultivation in the southern part of central Asia. The remainder of the vast stretch of the Eurasian steppes was inhabited by peoples who engaged in hunting, herding, and some rudimentary plant cultivation.

About 2000 B.C.E. nomadic pastoralism was gradually developed by the people who occupied the area between the Ural Mountains and the Caspian and Aral Seas. They were the first to develop horseback riding, wheeled transportation, and the use of animals for dairy food as well as meat... By 1500 B.C.E. this type of economy had spread, creating secondary centers radiating north from Lake Baikal, west to the Black Sea and south to the Hindu Kush. Throughout the period 1200-1100 B.C.E., other regions of the Eurasian continent were also impacted... the movement of Indo-European speaking groups, the "Aryans," was to change the ethnic composition of the Indian subcontinent forever. In the east, wars during the Shang and Chou dynasties probably contributed to a permanent pattern of confrontation along the northern Chinese border. In the west, people from central Asia migrated into Asia Minor, causing disturbances along the transition zones between the steppe and agricultural lands.

221 B.C.E. - 220 C.E.: Expansion in the Qin-Han period and Massive Movements of Peoples

The Qin-Han dynasties embraced a vast empire, covering the entire agricultural area along the northern steppe from eastern Siberia to central Asia. The nomadic peoples, a confederation of several groups speaking proto-Turkish, proto-Mongolian, and proto-Tungusic languages, were called the Xiongnu. This group subjugated many other states and tribes in the steppe region and the struggle between the Xiongnu and China lasted for centuries.

The story of the state of Yue Zhi is an interesting case study. In the mid-second century B.C.E., Yue Zhi was defeated by the Xiongnu. The people moved from their original homes in what is today the Chinese province of Gansu to settle in Bactria in western central Asia. This migration set off a chain reaction that caused a surge of migration across the Parthian Empire (Persia), almost destroying it. All traces of Alexander the Great's conquest of central Asia and the legacy of Hellenism was completely erased.

There is another interesting side effect of these centuries of warfare. In 44 B.C.E., one faction of the Xiongnu fled in defeat from Mongolia and settled in Russian Turkestan. These were the ancestors of the Huns, who in the 4th century C.E. crossed the Volga and the Don to invade Europe under the leadership of

Balamir and Attila. This movement of the Huns pressed the Goths to move further westward; the Goths sacked imperial Rome. Other Asian successors followed in the footsteps of the Huns - the Avars and the Bulgarian. These groups drove the Slavic peoples to enter and finally conquer the Eastern Roman Empire, just as the Germans conquered the Roman Empire in the west.

The repercussions of this movement in East Asia was also felt in West Asia and India. The Hephthalites, descendants of the Yue Zhi, caused many disturbances on the border of the Sassanid Empire in Persia in the 5th c. C.E. The domination of the Hephthalites lasted until 565, when they were replaced by the Tujue [T'u-chüeh](Turks). A remnant of the Hephthalites fled to the west and established a Mongol khanate in Hungary. Known as the Avars in Latin records, they attacked the Byzantine Empire and fought with the Germanic tribes to the west until they were overcome by Charlemagne in the early 9th century.

The Turkic Peoples and Islam

From 589-907 C.E., China was reunited under the Sui-Tang dynasties. At that time the masters of central Asia were new groups of nomads, the Tujue, whose name refer to a whole group of nations sharing the common language known as Turkish, and the Uighurs. The Tujue nomadic empire was perhaps the strongest one on the Eurasian steppes since the Xiongnu. By the 6th century they extended eastward to Mongolia and westward to Sassanid Persia. But in the 7th century, with the rise and spread of Islam, Arab Muslims rapidly ascended to prominence in Asia and the eastern Mediterranean world, causing the Tujue to be caught in the struggles between the Chinese and the Arabs. In 751 the Chinese lost when the Tujue and the Arabs allied themselves against them. Thus, central Asia, occupying the area between China and the West, embraced a form of Islam that included Turkic elements.

The Tujue Empire was succeeded in 744 by that of another Turkic people, the Uigurs, who remained the dominant power in central Asia until the 12th century. This non-Arabic ethnic group spread the Islamic faith and protected one-fourth of the region where it was practiced. In the 11th century, the rise of the Seljuk sultanate reflected the Islamization of the Turks and the Turkicization of a large part of the Middle East, especially Anatolia and Asia Minor.

Lastly, on the Russian steppes, from the 6th century, various groups of Asian nomads (Avars, Bulgars, Magyars), lived side by side with migrating Turkic settlers.

The Mongol Expansion and its Impact

The Mongol warriors reached as far west as the Danube; their descendants ruled the Transoxiana and Russia for centuries. Genghis Khan's remote descendants also established the Mughal Empire in India in the early 16th century.

II. Exchange of Material Culture

The Silk Road

The Silk Road was not a visible highway, but actually several overland caravan routes stretching from China to the Mediterranean world. From the time of the Han Dynasty imperial troops guarded it as a supply line since it was used by merchants and other travelers between China and the Central Asian states. In the west, the Silk Road had several roads which linked it with Europe. It was called the Silk Road but there were several other commodities that were traded in addition to silk – spices, precious stones and even livestock. Sometimes the silk woven in China did not appeal to Western taste. If that was the case, it was rewoven or altered along the route. Archeologists have also found coins along the route but not all the profit went to China. Many of the peoples along the way took their share of the wealth probably financing the rise of nomadic empire-building.

Botanical and Zoological Knowledge

Traders and travelers introduced many exotic and also useful species of Asian flora and fauna. Wheat,

for example, was probably introduced to Europe from West Asia as early as the neolithic period. A good number, however, were brought to Europe either along the overland Silk Road or later via the sea route.

4. AUREL STAIN: PIONEER OF THE SILK ROAD

(Annabel Walker, *Aurel Stein: Pioneer of the Silk Road,* University of Washington Press:Seattle,1995. Permission pending.)

Aurel Stein – archeologist, explorer, scholar, linguist, art expert. Which of these titles fits him best? When he died in 1942 one of the newspapers cited him as "The Greatest Explorer of Our Time." Aurel Stein, alone in a very hostile environment, explored the desert wastes of what is today called Xinjiang Province in Western China. His goal was simple. He wanted to explore and discover the riches of forgotten civilizations and specifically to (a) see the connection between the empire of Alexander the Great and the Chinese empires and (b) follow the path of the 8th Century Chinese monk, Hiuen Tsiang, who brought Buddhism to China.

Aurel Stein was born in Budapest during the heyday of the city. At the age of ten was sent to school in Dresden where he read *The Campaigns of Alexander.* This book became a seminal inspiration for him as well as a fascination for travel to far-off places. At the same time, the university in Budapest developed a chair to study Indo-European languages, with a focus on Sanskrit. First he gained his doctoral degree in Germany and then left for England, the best place for an orientalist to study. After two years of study abroad, Aurel heard of a position in the Punjab in India. He decided to go to India to work in 1887 and learn more about the Orient in the Orient.

Aurel Stein arrived in India in the late 1880's at the tail end of colonization. Stein went to work at Lahore's Oriental College and Punjab University – an area where his interests were concentrated in terms of languages, religion and history. It was also close to Kashmir, the location of some missing Sanskrit manuscripts by a 12th century poet. Although he was diligent in his duties, his heart looked forward to time in Kashmir for research.

During this period, Aurel Stein studied Hiuen Tsiang (Xuanzang), the 7th century Chinese Buddhist monk who traveled across Central Asia to India. The monk left China in 629 AD to collect Sanskrit texts of Buddhist texts and philosophy, traveling across Chinese Turkestan to Kashmir where he studied for two years before moving on to India. He spent several years in a monastery near Bodhgaya, where the Buddha is said to have achieved enlightenment. When he returned home in 645 he became a patron of the Emperor and spent twenty years in translation work. His description of his travels, *Record of the Western Regions*, was a source of inspiration for Stein during all his travels.

Stein was fascinated with the region when it was the heart of a dynamic Buddhist culture. During the reign of the Mauryan King Ashoka, Buddhism had been adopted in this part of the subcontinent. When the Bactrians swept down from N.W. Afghanistan, followed by Scythians, Parthians and Kushans, Buddhism fell into decline. This region was known as Gandhara, once a stronghold of Buddhism on the subcontinent. Gandhara straddled trade routes linking the East and the Mediterranean. The Buddhist art of Gandhara presented tangible evidence of the fusion of East and West cultures, demonstrating the assimilation of Greek art forms with Eastern culture. The Bactrians included men of Greek descent, heirs of men whom Alexander had left behind. The artistic traditions of the Greeks were adapted to Buddhist statuary, friezes and temples. Stein was interested in uncovering some of these finds for the British authorities in India since local governments had very little funding. Stein's career in India lasted until he retired from the Indian Civil Service and he used his position to obtain funding for his projects and explorations.

In the late 1880's, a manuscript which was little more than fragments of birch-bark was found which contained writing in Kharosthi, the ancient script of N.W. India which, with Brahmi, was used in the 3rd c. edicts of Ashoka. This was clear evidence of the diffusion of the Buddhist culture of Gandhara into the old Silk Road cities of Chinese Central Asia. Scholars knew from the writings of Hiuen Tsiang that Buddhist communities had existed in the region. It was amazing that the language and scripts had traveled intact from northern India through the vast deserts of the north. Stein now realized

that the desert might yield more than manuscripts. This region, known today as Sinkiang (Xinjiang Autonomous Province), had been ruled by the Chinese for centuries, although its people were of Turkish rather than Chinese origins. The Buddhist pilgrims who wandered this region from the 5th c. AD, briefly mentioned the oases which fringed the Taklamakan Desert but the cities that had been there had been swallowed by the sands. Little was known about these lost civilizations.

However, this area was of special imperial interest because of its location bordering on India, Afghanistan, Russia and China. The British had sent a representative to a station in Kashgar to keep an eye on the powerful Russian Consul. Moreover, the Swedish geographer, Sven Hedin had explored the region first in 1895 and had even encountered the ruined city of Khotan, one of the ancient cities on the old Silk Road. Beginning in September, 1898, Stein began to plan an expedition to the Khotan region, hoping to be financed by the Punjab government. Stein was also able to enlist the encouragement of Lord Curzon, the new British Viceroy, who was interested in the archeology of India. In May, 1900, he set off for Khotan, jointly funded by the Government of India and the governments of the Bengal and the Punjab. Stein methodically gathered a team of expert linguists and men familiar with the terrain to travel with him, as well as arranging for all the supplies that would be needed for such an expedition. It was the birth of a great adventure!

The region of Chinese, or Eastern Turkestan was – and remains – one of the most remote and least hospitable in all Asia. Massive mountain ranges isolates it from neighboring countries; and the arid conditions of the Tarim Basin, in its midst, restricted its population to scattered oases on the fringes of the vast Taklamakan Desert. Its chief towns were thousands of miles from the seat of national authority, and communication between them was by means of roads whose conditions had barely changed in centuries. On the southern border were the Karakoram Mountains, the Kun-lun range and the Tibetan plateau. Along the N.W. border ran the T'ien-shan, or Celestial Mountains; to the west the spiked peaks of the Pamirs, the Roof of the World, separating Eastern from Western or Russian Turkestan. Camel caravans had once traveled this region, pursuing trade between China and the Mediterranean but that had long since passed and the local people possessed no written records of their own history. Few foreigners had undertaken or survived a journey here.

The Gobi and the Lop deserts were said to have spirits which lured men to their death. It was inhabited largely by Moslem Uighurs, controlled by a small Chinese minority of civil and military officials.

Stein knew about the Western regions from his reading of Hiuen Tsiang. The Chinese had first contemplated extending their influence westward in the 2nd c. AD, searching for allies against the Huns who were threatening their northern borders. One of the emperors of the Han Dynasty sought to gain the help of the Yuezhi people, nomadic people who had once lived on the fringes of China but the Huns had driven them beyond the Pamirs. The Han Emperor had sent an envoy to reach the Yuezhi but he was captured by the Huns and spent ten years as a prisoner. However, he did eventually reach the Yuezhi and then returned to tell the Emperor that there were civilized lands that lay beyond the deserts of the west and there were handsome horses there. The Chinese began to drive the Huns back from this approach to the West and began to send political missions to the states in and beyond the Tarim Basin. So it was that the first fabric made from the cocoons of the silk worm was first brought from China along the routes to the West, giving these routes, many centuries later, the collective name of the Silk Road.

Chinese control of the area vied with Turkish tribes and the only record is that of passing Chinese pilgrims writing about the Buddhist culture of the oases at that time. In the 7th c., the Chinese T'ang Dynasty reasserted its power but was challenged by the Tibetans to the south and the Arabs advancing from the west under the banner of Islam. The Chinese did raise an expedition to try to stop the invasion from the west but Islam continued to flow into Chinese Turkestan. The situation did not improve until the Mongols under Genghis Khan (13th c.) established stability so that trade routes could again cross the Tarim Basin. It was at this time that Marco Polo supposedly visited China. Stein read and reread the mercantile adventures of the Venetian Polo as he spent twenty years traveling across Eurasia from the Yellow Sea to the Mediterranean. In more recent times, Sven Hedin had crossed the

Taklamakan Desert and various Russians, scholars and adventurers, had been to Kashgar and Turfan.

5. THE STORY OF THE SILK ROAD

(from http://silk-road.com, oliver@halo.ps.uci.edu, originally oliver@atm.ch.cam.ac.uk. Reprinted with permission from the author.)

Introduction

The region separating China from Europe and Western Asia is not the most hospitable in the world. Much of it is taken up by the Taklamakan desert, one of the most hostile environments on our planet. There is very little vegetation and almost no rainfall; sandstorms are very common, and have claimed the lives of countless people. The locals have a very great respect for this 'Land of Death'; few travelers in the past have had anything good to say about it. It covers a vast area, through which few roads pass; caravans throughout history have skirted its edges, from one isolated oasis to the next. The climate is harsh; in the summer the daytime temperatures are in the 40's, with temperatures greater than 50 degrees Celsius measured not infrequently in the sub-sea level basin of Turfan. In winter the temperatures dip below minus 20 degrees. Temperatures soar in the sun, but drop very rapidly at dusk. Sand storms here are very common, and particularly dangerous due to the strength of the winds and the nature of the surface. Unlike the Gobi desert, where there are a relatively large number of oases, and water can be found not too far below the surface, the Taklamakan has much sparser resources.

The land surrounding the Taklamakan is equally hostile. To the northeast lies the Gobi desert, almost as harsh in climate as the Taklamakan itself, on the remaining three sides lie some of the highest mountains in the world. To the South are the Himalaya, Karakorum and Kunlun ranges, which provide an effective barrier separating Central Asia from the Indian sub-continent. Only a few icy passes cross these ranges, and they are some of the most difficult in the world; they are mostly over 5000 metres in altitude, and are dangerously narrow, with precipitous drops into deep ravines. To the north and west lie the Tian Shan and Pamir ranges; though greener and less high, the passes crossing these have still provided more than enough problems for the travelers of the past. Approaching the area from the east, the least difficult entry is along the 'Gansu Corridor', a relatively fertile strip running along the base of the Qilian mountains, separating the great Mongolian plateau and the Gobi from the Tibetan High Plateau. Coming from the west or south, the only way in is over the passes.

The Early History of The Region

On the eastern and western sides of the continent, the civilizations of China and the West developed. The western end of the trade route appears to have developed earlier than the eastern end, principally because of the development of the the empires in the west, and the easier terrain of Persia and Syria. The Iranian empire of Persia was in control of a large area of the Middle East, extending as far as the Indian Kingdoms to the east. Trade between these two neighbours was already starting to influence the cultures of these regions.

This region was taken over by Alexander the Great of Macedon, who finally conquered the Iranian empire, and colonised the area in about 330 B.C., superimposing the culture of the Greeks. Although he only ruled the area until 325 B.C., the effect of the Greek invasion was quite considerable. The Greek language was brought to the area, and Greek mythology was introduced. The aesthetics of Greek sculpture were merged with the ideas developed from the Indian kingdoms, and a separate local school of art emerged. By the third century B.C., the area had already become a crossroads of Asia, where Persian, Indian and Greek ideas met. It is believed that the residents of the Hunza valley in the Karakorum are the direct descendants of the army of Alexander; this valley is now followed by the Karakorum Highway, on its way from Pakistan over to Kashgar, and indicates how close to the Taklamakan Alexander may have got. This 'crossroads' region, covering the area to the south of the Hindu Kush and Karakorum ranges, now Pakistan and Afghanistan, was overrun by a number of different peoples. After the Greeks, the tribes from Palmyra, in Syria, and then

Parthia, to the east of the Mediterranean, took over the region. These peoples were less sophisticated than the Greeks, and adopted the Greek language and coin system in this region, introducing their own influences in the fields of sculpture and art.

Close on the heels of the Parthians came the Yuezhi people from the Northern borders of the Taklimakan. They had been driven from their traditional homeland by the Xiongnu tribe (who later became the Huns and transferred their attentions towards Europe), and settled in Northern India. Their descendants became the Kushan people, and in the first century A.D. they moved into this crossroads area, bringing their adopted Buddhist religion with them. Like the other tribes before them, they adopted much of the Greek system that existed in the region. The product of this marriage of cultures was the Gandhara culture, based in what is now the Peshawar region of northwest Pakistan. This fused Greek and Buddhist art into a unique form, many of the sculptures of Buddhist deities bearing strong resemblances to the Greek mythological figure Heracles. The Kushan people were the first to show Buddha in human form, as before this time artists had preferred symbols such as the footprint, stupa or tree of enlightenment, either out of a sense of sacrilege or simply to avoid persecution.

The eastern end of the route developed rather more slowly. In China, the Warring States period was brought to an end by the Qin state, which unified China to form the Qin Dynasty, under Qin Shi Huangdi. The harsh reforms introduced to bring the individual states together seem brutal now, but the unification of the language, and standardisation of the system, had long lasting effects. The capital was set up in Changan, which rapidly developed into a large city, now Xian.

The Xiongnu tribe had been periodically invading the northern borders during the Warring States period with increasing frequency. The northern-most states had been trying to counteract this by building defensive walls to hinder the invaders, and warn of their approach. Under the Qin Dynasty, in an attempt to subdue the Xiongnu, a campaign to join these sections of wall was initiated, and the 'Great Wall was born. When the Qin collapsed in 206 B.C., after only 15 years, the unity of China was preserved by the Western Han Dynasty, which continued to construct the Wall.

During one of their campaigns against the Xiongnu, in the reign of Emperor Wudi, the Han learnt from some of their prisoners that the Yuezhi had been driven further to the west. It was decided to try to link up with these peoples in order to form an alliance against the Xiongnu. The first intelligence operation in this direction was in 138 B.C. under the leadership of Zhang Qian, brought back much of interest to the court, with information about hitherto unknown states to the west, and about a new, larger breed of horse that could be used to equip the Han cavalry. The trip was certainly eventful, as the Xiongnu captured them, and kept them hostage for ten years; after escaping and continuing the journey, Zhang Qian eventually found the Yuezhi in Northern India. Unfortunately for the Han, they had lost any interest in forming an alliance against the Xiongnu. On the return joumey, Zhang Qian and his delegation were again captured, and it was not until 125 B.C. that they arrived back in Changan. The emperor was much interested by what they found; however, and more expeditions were sent out towards the West over the following years. After a few failures, a large expedition managed to obtain some of the so-called "heavenly horses," which helped transform the Han cavalry. These horses have been immortalised in the art of the period, one of the best examples being the small bronze "flying horse" found at Wuwei in the Gansu Corridor, now used as the emblem of the China International Travel Service. Spurred on by their discoveries, the Han missions pushed further westwards, and may have got as far as Persia. They brought back many objects from these regions, in particular some of the religious artwork from the Gandharan culture, and other objects of beauty for the emperor. By this process, the route to the west was opened up. Zhang Qian is still seen by many to be the father of the Silk Road.

In the west, the Greek empire was taken over by the Roman empire. Even at this stage, before the time of Zhang Qian, small quantities of Chinese goods, including silk, were reaching the west. This is likely to have arrived with individual traders, who may have

started to make the journey in search of new markets despite the danger or the political situation of the time.

The Nature of the Route

The description of this route to the west as the 'Silk Road' is somewhat misleading. Firstly, no single route was taken; crossing Central Asia several different branches developed, passing through different oasis settlements. The routes all started from the capital in Changan, headed up the Gansu corridor, and reached Dunhuang on the edge of the Taklamakan. The northern route then passed through Yumen Guan (Jade Gate Pass) and crossed the neck of the Gobi desert to Hami (Kumul), before following the Tian Shan mountains round the northern fringes of the Taklamakan. It passed through the major oases of Turfan and Kuqa before arriving at Kashgar, at the foot of the Pamirs. The southern route branched off at Dunhuang, passing through the Yang Guan and skirting the southern edges of the desert, via Miran, Hetian (Khotan) and Shache (Yarkand), finally turning north again to meet the other route at Kashgar. Numerous other routes were also used to a lesser extent; one branched off from the southern route and headed through the Eastern end of the Taklamakan to the city of Loulan, before joining the Northern route at Korla. Kashgar became the new crossroads of Asia; from here the routes again divided, heading across the Pamirs to Samarkand and to the south of the Caspian Sea, or to the South, over the Karakorum into India; a further route split from the northern route after Kuqa and headed across the Tian Shan range to eventually reach the shores of the Caspian Sea, via Tashkent.

Secondly, the Silk Road was not a trade route that existed solely for the purpose of trading in silk; many other commodities were also traded, from gold and ivory to exotic animals and plants. Of all the precious goods crossing this area, silk was perhaps the most remarkable for the people of the West. It is often thought that the Romans had first encountered silk in one of their campaigns against the Parthians in 53 B.C, and realised that it could not have been produced by this relatively unsophisticated people. They reputedly learnt from Parthian prisoners that it came from a mysterious tribe in the east, who they came to refer to as the silk people, 'Seres'. In practice, it is likely that silk and other goods were beginning to filter into Europe before this time, though only in very small quantities. The Romans obtained samples of this new material, and it quickly became very popular in Rome, for its soft texture and attractiveness. The Parthians quickly realized that there was money to be made from trading the material, and sent trade missions towards the east. The Romans also sent their own agents out to explore the route, and to try to obtain silk at a lower price than that set by the Parthians. For this reason, the trade route to the East was seen by the Romans as a route for silk rather than the other goods that were traded. The name 'Silk Road' itself does not originate from the Romans, however, but is a nineteenth century term, coined by the German scholar, von Richthofen.

In addition to silk, the route carried many other precious commodities. Caravans heading towards China carried gold and other precious metals, ivory, precious stones, and glass, which was not manufactured in China until the fifth century. In the opposite direction furs, ceramics, jade, bronze objects, lacquer and iron were carried. Many of these goods were bartered for others along the way, and objects often changed hands several times. There are no records of Roman traders being seen in Changan, nor Chinese merchants in Rome, though their goods were appreciated in both places. This would obviously have been in the interests of the Parthians and other middlemen, who took as large a profit from the change of hands as they could.

The Development of the Route

The development of these Central Asian trade routes caused some problems for the Han rulers in China. Bandits soon learnt of the precious goods traveling up the Gansu Corridor and skirting the Taklamakan, and took advantage of the terrain to plunder these caravans. Caravans of goods needed their own defence forces, and this was an added cost for the merchants making the trip. The route took the caravans to the farthest extent of the Han Empire, and policing this route became a big problem. This was partially overcome by building forts and defensive walls

along part of the route. Sections of 'Great Wall' were built along the northern side of the Gansu Corridor, to try to prevent the Xiongnu from harming the trade; Tibetan bandits from the Qilian mountains to the south were also a problem. Sections of Han dynasty wall can still be seen as far as Yumen Guan, well beyond the recognised beginning of the Great Wall at Jiayuguan. However, these fortifications were not all as effective as intended, as the Chinese lost control of sections of the route at regular intervals.

The Han dynasty set up the local government at Wulei, not far from Kuqa on the northern border of the Taklamakan, in order to 'protect' the states in this area, which numbered about 50 at the time. At about the same period the city of Gaochang was constructed in the Turfan basin. This developed into the centre of the Huihe kingdom; these peoples later became the Uygur minority who now make up a large proportion of the local population. Many settlements were set up along the way, mostly in the oasis areas, and profited from the passing trade. They also absorbed a lot of the local culture, and the cultures that passed them by along the route. Very few merchants traversed the full length of the road; most simply covered part of the journey, selling their wares a little further from home, and then returning with the proceeds. Goods therefore tended to moved slowly across Asia, changing hands many times. Local people no doubt acted as guides for the caravans over the most dangerous sections of the journey.

After the Western Han dynasty, successive dynasties brought more states under Chinese control. Settlements came and went, as they changed hands or lost importance due to a change in the routes. The Chinese garrison town of Loulan, for example, on the edge of the Lop Nor lake, was important in the third century A.D., but was abandoned when the Chinese lost control of the route for a period. Many settlements were buried during times of abandonment by the sands of the Taklamakan, and could not be repopulated.

The settlements reflected the nature of the trade passing through the region. Silk, on its way to the west, often got no further than this region of Central Asia. The Astana tombs, where the nobles of Gaochang were buried, have turned up examples of silk cloth from China, as well as objects from as far afield as Persia and India. Much can be learned about the customs of the time from the objects found in these graves, and from the art work of the time, which has been excellently preserved on the tomb walls, due to the extremely dry conditions. The bodies themselves have also been well preserved, and may allow scientific studies to ascertain their origins.

The most significant commodity carried along this route was not silk, but religion. Buddhism came to China from India this way, along the northern branch of the route. The first influences came as the passes over the Karakorum were first explored. The Eastern Han emperor Mingdi is thought to have sent a representative to India to discover more about this strange faith, and further missions returned bearing scriptures, and bringing with them Indian priests. With this came influences from the Indian sub-continent, including buddhist art work, examples of which have been found in several early, second century tombs in present-day Sichuan province. This was considerably influenced by the Himalayan Massif, an effective barrier between China and India, and hence the Buddhism in China is effectively derived from the Gandhara culture by the bend in the Indus river, rather than directly from India. Buddhism reached the pastures of Tibet at a rather later period, not developing fully until the seventh century. Along the way it developed under many different influences, before reaching central China. This is displayed very clearly in the artwork, where many of the cave paintings show people with clearly different ethnic backgrounds, rather than the expected Cental and East Asian peoples.

The Greatest Years

The height of the importance of the Silk Road was during the Tang dynasty, with relative internal stability in China after the divisions of the earlier dynasties since the Han. The individual states had mostly been assimilated, and the threats from marauding peoples were rather less. During this period, in the seventh century, the Chinese traveller Xuan Zhuang crossed the region on his way to obtain

Buddhist scriptures from India. He followed the northern branch round the Taklamakan on his outward journey, and the southern route on his return; he carefully recorded the cultures and styles of Buddhism along the way. On his return to the Tang capital at Changan, he was permitted to build the Great Goose Pagoda in the southern half of the city, to house the more than 600 scriptures that he had brought back from India. He is still seen by the Chinese as an important influence in the development of Buddhism in China, and his travels were dramatised in the popular classic, *Tales of a Journey to the West.*

The art and civilization of the Silk Road achieved its highest point in the Tang Dynasty. Changan, as the starting point of the route, as well as the capital of the dynasty, developed into one of the largest and most cosmopolitan cities of the time. By 742 A.D., the population had reached almost two million, and the city itself covered almost the same area as present-day Xian, considerably more than within the present walls of the city. The 754 A.D. census showed that five thousand foreigners lived in the city; Turks, Iranians, Indians and others from along the Road, as well as Japanese, Koreans and Malays from the east. Many were missionaries, merchants or pilgrims, but every other occupation was also represented. Rare plants, medicines, spices and other goods from the west were to be found in the bazaars of the city. It is quite clear, however, despite the exotic imports, that the Chinese regarded all foreigners as barbarians; the gifts provided for the Emperors by foreign rulers were simply considered as tribute from vassal states.

After the Tang, however, the traffic along the road subsided, along with the grotto building and art of the period. The Five Dynasties period did not maintain the internal stability of the Tang dynasty, and again neighbouring states started to plunder the caravans. China was partially unified again in the Song dynasty, but the Silk Road was not as important as it had been in the Tang.

From the point of view of those in the far west, China was still an unknown territory, and silk production was not understood. Since the days of Alexander the Great, there had been some knowledge of India, but there was no real knowledge of, or contact with, the 'Seres' until about the 7th century, when information started to filter along the Road. It was at this time that the rise of Islam started to affect Asia, and a curtain came down between the east and west. Trade relations soon resumed, however, with the Moslems playing the part of middlemen. The sea route to China was explored at this time, and the "Sea Silk Route" was opened, eventually holding a more important place than the land route itself, as the land route became less profitable. But the final shake-up that occurred was to come from a different direction; the hoards from the grasslands of Mongolia.

The Mongols

Trade along the route was adversely affected by the strife which built up between the Christian and Moslem worlds. The Crusades brought the Christian world a little nearer to Central Asia, but the unified Moslem armies under Saladin drove them back again. In the Fourth Crusade, the forces of Latin Christianity scored a triumph over their Greek rivals, with the capture of Constantinople (Istanbul). However, it was not the Christians who finally split the Moslem world, but the Mongols from the east. Whilst Europe and Western Asia were torn by religious differences, the Mongols had only the vaguest of religious beliefs. Several of the tribes of Turkestan which had launched offensives westwards towards Persia and Arabia, came to adopt Islam, and Islam had spread far across Central Asia, but had not reached as far as the tribes which wandered the vast grasslands of Mongolia. These nomadic peoples had perfected the arts of archery and horsemanship. With an eye to expanding their sphere of influence, they met in 1206 and elected a leader for their unified forces; he took the title Great Khan. Under the leadership of Genghis Khan, they rapidly proceeded to conquer a huge region of Asia. The former Han city of Jiaohe, to the west of Turfan, was decimated by the Mongols as they passed through on their way westwards. The Empire they carved out enveloped the whole of Central Asia from China to Persia, and stretched as far west as the Mediterranean. This Mongol empire was maintained after Genghis' death, with the western section of the

empire divided into three main lordships, falling to various of his descendants as lesser Khans, and with the eastern part remaining under the rule of the Great Khan, a title which was inherited by Kublai Khan. Kubilai completed the conquest of China, subduing the Song in the South of the country, and established the Yuan dynasty.

The partial unification of so many states under the Mongol Empire allowed a significant interaction between cultures of different regions. The route of the Silk Road became important as a path for communication between different parts of the Empire, and trading was continued. Although less "civilized" than people in the west, the Mongols were more open to ideas. Kubilai Khan, in particular, is reported to have been quite sympathetic to most religions, and a large number of people of different nationalities and creeds took part in the trade across Asia, and settled in China. The most popular religion in China at the time was Daoism, which at first the Mongols favored. However, from the middle of the thirteenth century onwards, Buddhist influence increased, and the early Lamaist Buddhism from Tibet was particularly favored. The two religions existed side by side for a long period during the Yuan dynasty. This religious liberalism was extended to all; Christianity first made headway in China in this period, with the first Roman Catholic arch-bishopric set up in Beijing in 1307. The Nestorian church was quite widespread in China; Jews and Moslems also populated several of the major cities, though they do not seem to have made many converts.

It was at this time that Europeans first ventured towards the lands of the "Seres." The earliest were probably Franciscan friars who are reported to have visited the Mongolian city of Karakoram. The first Europeans to arrive at Kubilai's court were Northern European traders, who arrived in 1261. However, the most well known and best documented visitor was the Italian Marco Polo. As a member of a merchant family from Venice, he was a good businessman and a keen observer. Starting in 1271, at the age of only seventeen, his travels with his father and uncle took him across Persia, and then along the southern branch of the Silk Road, via Khotan, finally ending at the court of Kubilai Khan at Khanbalik, the site of present-day Beijing, and the summer palace, better known as Xanadu. He traveled quite extensively in China, before returning to Italy by ship, via Sumatra and India to Hormuz and Constantinople. He describes the way of life in the cities and small kingdoms through which his party passed, with particular interest on the trade and marriage customs. His classification of other races center mainly on their religion, and he looks at things with the eyes of one brought up under the auspices of the Catholic Church; it is therefore not surprising that he has a great mistrust of the Moslems, but he seems to have viewed the 'Idolaters' (Buddhists and Hindus) with more tolerance. He judges towns and countryside in terms of productivity; he appears to be have been quick to observe available sources of food and water along the way, and to size up the products and manufacture techniques of the places they passed through. His description of exotic plants and beasts are sufficiently accurate to be quite easily recognizable, and better than most of the textbooks of the period. He seems to have shown little interest in the history of the regions he was passing through, however, and his reports of military campaigns are full of inaccuracies, though this might be due to other additions or misinformation.

The *Travels* were not actually written by Marco Polo himself. After his return to the West in 1295, he was captured as a prisoner of war in Genoa, when serving in the Venetian forces. Whilst detained in prison for a year, he met Rustichello of Pisa, a relatively well-known romance writer and a fellow prisoner of war. Rustichello was obviously attracted to the possibilities of writing a romantic tale of adventure about Polo's travels; it should be remembered that the book was written for entertainment rather than as a historic document. However, the collaboration between them, assuming that the story has not been embroidered excessively by Rustichello, gives an interesting picture of life along the Silk Road in the time of the Khans. Some of the tales are no doubt due to the romance-writing instincts of Rustichello, and some of those due to Polo are at best third-hand reports from people he met; however, much of the material can be verified against Chinese and Persian records. As a whole, the book captured public notice at the time, and added much to what was known

of Asian geography, customs and natural history.

The Decline of the Route

However, the Mongolian Empire was to be fairly short-lived. Splits between the different khans had erupted as early as 1262. Although the East was considerably more stable, especially under the rule of Kubilai, it also succumbed to a resurgence of Chinese nationalism, and after several minor local rebellions in the first few decades of the fourteenth century, principally in the south of China, the Yuan dynasty was finally replaced by the Ming dynasty in 1368. With the disintegration of the Mongol empire, the revival of Islam and the isolationist policies of the Ming dynasty, the barriers rose again on the land route between East and West.

Despite the presence of the Mongols, trade along the Silk Road never reached the heights that it did in the Tang dynasty. The steady advance of Islam, temporarily halted by the Mongols, continued until it formed a major force across Central Asia, surrounding the Taklamakan like Buddhism had almost a millennium earlier. The artwork of the region suffered under the encroach of Islam. Whereas the Buddhist artists had concentrated on figures in painting and sculpture, the human form was scorned in Islamic artwork; this difference led to the destruction of much of the original artwork. Many of the grottos have been defaced in this way, particularly at the more accessible sites such as Bezeklik, near Turfan, where most of the human faces in the remaining frescoes have been scratched out. The demise of the Silk Road also owes much to the development of the silk route by sea. It was becoming rather easier and safer to transport goods by water rather than overland. Ships had become stronger and more reliable, and the route passed promising new markets in Southern Asia. The overland problems of 'tribal politics' between the different peoples along the route, and the presence of middlemen, all taking their cut on the goods, prompted this move. The sea route, however, suffered from the additional problems of bad weather and pirates. In the early fifteenth century, the Chinese seafarer Zhang He commanded seven major maritime expeditions to Southeast Asia and India, and as far as Arabia and the east coast of Africa. Diplomatic relations were built up with several countries along the route, and this increased the volume of trade Chinese merchants brought to the area. In the end, the choice of route depended very much upon the political climate of the time.

The encroach of the deserts into the inhabited land made life on the edges of the Taklamakan and Gobi Deserts particularly difficult. Any settlement abandoned for a while was swallowed by the desert, and so resettlement became increasingly difficult. These conditions were only suitable in times of peace, when effort could be spent countering this advance, and maintaining water sources.

The attitude of the later Chinese dynasties was the final blow to the trade route. The isolationist policies of the Ming dynasties did nothing to encourage trade between China and the rapidly developing West. This attitude was maintained throughout the Ming and Qing dynasties, and only started to change after the Western powers began making inroads into China in the nineteenth century. By the beginning of the Eighteenth Century, the Qing dynasty subdued the Dzungar people, however, and annexed the whole Taklamakan region, forming the basis of present-day Xinjiang province. This restored China to the state it had been in the Han dynasty, with full control of the western regions, but also including the territories and Tibet and Mongolia. However, as trade with the West subsided, so did the traffic along the Road, and all but the best-watered oases survived. The grottos and other religious sites were long since neglected, now that the local peoples had espoused a new religion, and the old towns and sites were buried deeper beneath the sands.

Foreign Influence

Renewed interest in the Silk Road only emerged among western scholars towards the end of the nineteenth century. This emerged after various countries started to explore the region. The foreign involvement in this area was due mostly to the interest of the powers of the time in expanding their territories. The British, in particular, were interested in consolidating some of the

land north of their Indian territories. The first official trip for the Survey of India was in 1863, and soon afterwards, the existence of ancient cities lost in the desert was confirmed. A trade delegation was sent to Kashgar in 1890, and the British were eventually to set up a consulate in 1908. They saw the presence of Russia as a threat to the trade developing between Kashgar and India, and the power struggle between these two empires in this region came to be referred to as the 'Great Game'. British agents (mostly Indians) crossed the Himalayas from Ladakh and India to Kashgar, traveling as merchants, and gathering what information they could, including surveying the geography of the route. At a similar time, Russians were entering from the north; most were botanists, geologists or cartographers, but they had no doubt been briefed to gather whatever intelligence they could. The Russians were the first to chance on the ruined cities at Turfan. The local treasure hunters were quick to make the best of these travelers, both in this region and near Kashgar, and noting the interest the foreigners showed towards the relics, sold them a few of the articles that they had dug out of the ruins. In this way a few ancient articles and old manuscripts started to appear in the West. When these reached the hands of Orientalists in Europe, and the manuscripts were slowly deciphered, they caused a large deal of interest, and more people were sent out to look out for them.

The study of the Road really took off after the expeditions of the Swede Sven Hedin in 1895. He was an accomplished cartographer and linguist, and became one of the most renowned explorers of the time. He crossed the Pamirs to Kashgar, and then set out to explore the more desolate parts of the region. He even succeeded in making a crossing of the centre of the Taklamakan, though he was one of only three members of the party who made it across, the rest succumbing to thirst after their water had run out. He was intrigued by local legends of demons in the Taklamakan, guarding ancient cities full of treasure, and met several natives who had chanced upon such places. In his later travels, he discover several ruined cities on the south side of the desert, and his biggest find, the city of Loulan, from which he removed a large number of ancient manuscripts.

After Hedin, the archaeological race started. Sir Aurel Stein of Britain and Albert von Le Coq of Germany were the principle players, though the Russians and French, and then the Japanese, quickly followed suit. There followed a period of frenzied digging around the edges of the Taklamakan, to discover as much as possible about the old Buddhist culture that had existed long before. The dryness of the climate, coupled with the exceedingly hot summers and cold winters, made this particularly difficult. However the enthusiasm to discover more of the treasures of the region, as well as the competition between the individuals and nations involved, drove them to continue. Although they produced reports of what they discovered, their excavation techniques were often far from scientific, and they removed whatever they could from the sites in large packing cases for transport to the museums at home. The manuscripts were probably the most highly prized of the finds; tales of local people throwing these old scrolls into rivers as rubbish tormented them. Removal of these from China probably did help preserve them. However, the frescoes from the grottos also attracted their attention, and many of the best ones were cut into sections, and carefully peeled off the wall with a layer of plaster; these were then packaged very carefully for transport. To their credit, almost all these murals survived the journey, albeit in pieces.

The crowning discovery was of a walled-up library within the Mogao grottos at Dunhuang. This contained a stack of thousands of manuscripts, Buddhist paintings and silk temple banners. The manuscripts were in Chinese, Sanskrit, Tibetan, Uyghur and several other less widely known languages, and they covered a wide range of subjects; everything from sections of the Lutras Sutra to stories and ballads from the Tang dynasty and before. Among these is what is believed to be the world's oldest printed book. This hoard had been discovered by a Daoist monk at the beginning of the twentieth century, and he had appointed himself as their protector. The Chinese authorities appear to have been aware of the existence of the library, but were perhaps not fully aware of its significance, and they had decided to leave the contents where they were, under the protection of the monk. On hearing of this hoard, Stein came to see them; he gradually persuaded the monk to

part with a few of the best for a small donation towards the rebuilding of the temple there. On successive visits, he removed larger quantities; the French archaeologist Pelliot also got wind of this discovery, and managed to obtain some. The frescoes at Dunhuang were also some of the best on the whole route, and many of the most beautiful ones were removed by the American professor Langdon Warner and his party.

The archaeological free-for-all came to a close after a change in the political scene. On the 25th of May, 1925 a student demonstration in the treaty port of Shanghai was broken up by the British by opening fire on them, killing a number of the rioters. This instantly created a wave of anti-foreign hostility throughout China, and effectively brought the explorations of the Western Archaeologists to an end. The Chinese authorities started to take a much harsher view of the foreign intervention, and made the organisation of the trips much more difficult; they started to insist that all finds should be turned over to the relevant Chinese [political] organs. This effectively brought an end to foreign exploration of the region.

The treasures of the ancient Silk Road are now scattered around museums in perhaps as many as a dozen countries. The biggest collections are in the British Museum and in Delhi, due to Stein, and in Berlin, due to von Le Coq. The manuscripts attracted a lot of scholarly interest, and deciphering them is still not quite complete. Most of them are now in the British Library, and available for specialist study, but not on display. A large proportion of the Berlin treasures were lost during the Second World War; twenty eight of the largest frescoes, which had been attached to the walls of the old Ethnological Museum in Berlin for the purposes of display to the public, were lost in an Allied Air Force bombing raids between 1943 and 1945. A huge quantity of material brought back to London by Stein has mostly remained where it was put; museums can never afford the space to show more than just a few of the better relics, especially not one with such a large worldwide historical coverage as the British Museum.

The Chinese have understandably taken a harsh view of the "treasure seeking" of these early Western archaeologists. Much play is made on the removal of such a large quantity of artwork from the country when it was in no state to formally complain, and when the western regions, in particular, were under the control of a succession of warlord leaders. There is a feeling that the West was taking advantage of the relatively undeveloped China, and that many of the treasures would have been much better preserved in China itself. This is not entirely true; many of the grottos were crumbling after more than a thousand years of earthquakes, and substantial destruction was wrought by farmers improving the irrigation systems. Between the visits of Stein and Warner to Dunhuang, a group of White Russian soldiers fleeing into China had passed by, and defaced many of the best remaining frescoes to such an extent that the irate Warner decided to "salvage" as much as he could of the rest. The Chinese authorities at the time seem to have known about the art treasures of places like Dunhuang, but don't seem to have been prepared to protect them; the serious work of protection and restoration was left until the formation of the People's Republic.

Their only consolation is that many of the scrolls which had been purchased from native treasure-hunters at the western end of the Taklamakan at the beginning of the century were later found to have been remarkably good forgeries. Many were produced by an enterprising Moslem in Khotan, who had sensed how much money would be involved in this trade. This severely embarrassed a number of Western Orientalists, but the number of people misled attests to their quality.

The Present Day

The Silk Road, after a long period of hibernation, has been increasing in importance again recently.The fight of man against the desert, one of the biggest problems for the early travelers, is finally gaining ground. There has been some progress in controlling the progress of the shifting sands, which had previously meant having to resite settlements. The construction of roads around the edges of the Taklamakan has eased access, and the discovery of large oil reserves under the desert has encouraged this development. The area is rapidly being industrialised, and Urumchi, the present capital of Xinjiang, has become a particularly

unprepossessing Han Chinese industrial city.

The trade route itself is also being reopened. The sluggish trade between the peoples of Xinjiang and those of the Soviet Union has developed quickly; trade with the C.I.S. (Commonwealth of Independent States, 13 republics of the former Soviet Union) is picking up rapidly with a flourishing trade in consumer items as well as heavy industry. The new Central Asian republics had previously contributed much of the heavy industry of the former Soviet Union, with a reliance for consumer goods on Russia. Trade with China is therefore starting to fulfill this demand. This trading has been encouraged by the recent trend towards a 'socialist market economy' in China, and the increasing freedom of movement being allowed, particularly for the minorities such as those in Xinjiang. Many of these nationalities are now participating in cross-border trade, regularly making the journey to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

The railway connecting Lanzhou to Urumchi has been extended to the border with Kazakhstan, where on the 12th of September 1990 it was finally joined to the former Soviet railway system, providing an important route to the new republics and beyond. This Eurasian Continental Bridge, built to rival the Trans-Siberian Railway, has been constructed from LianYunGang city in Jiangsu province (on the East China coast) to Rotterdam; the first phase of this development has already been completed, and the official opening of the railway was held on the 1st of December 1992. It is already promised to be at least 20% cheaper than the route by sea, and at 11,000 kilometres is significantly shorter. From China the route passes through Kazakhstan, Russia, Byelorussia and Poland, before reaching Germany and the Netherlands. The double-tracking of the railway from Lanzhou to the border of the C.I.S. has now been put high on the Chinese development priority list.

Restoration and Tourism

Since the intervention of the West last century, interest has been growing in this ancient trade route. The books written by Stein, Hedin and others have brought the perceived oriental mystery of the route into western common knowledge. Instilled with such romantic ideals as following in the footsteps of Marco Polo, a rapidly increasing number of people have been interested in visiting these desolate places. Since China opened its doors to foreign tourists at the end of the 1970's, it has realised how much foreign currency can be brought to the country by tapping this tourist potential. This has encouraged the authorities to do their best to protect the remaining sites; restoration of many of the sites is presently underway. The Mogao grottos were probably the first place to attract this attention; the Dunhuang Research Institute has been studying and preserving the remains of the grottos, as well as what was left of the library. Restoration is presently underway; the outside of the grottos was faced in a special concrete to prevent further subsidence, and some of the murals are being touched up by a team of specially trained artists and craftsmen.

Archaeological excavations have been started by the Chinese where the foreigners laid off; significant finds have been produced from such sites as the Astana tombs, where the dead from the city of Gaochang were buried. Finds of murals and clothing amongst the grave goods have increased knowledge of life along the old Silk Road; the dryness of the climate has helped preserve the bodies of the dead, as well as their garments. There is still a lot to see around the Taklamakan, mostly in the form of damaged grottos and ruined cities. Whilst some people are drawn by the archaeology, others are attracted by the minority peoples; there are thirteen different races of people in the region, apart from the Han Chinese, from the Tibetans and Mongolians in the east of the region, to the Tajik, Kazakhs and Uzbeks in the west. Others are drawn to the mysterious cities such as Kashgar, where the Sunday market maintains much of the old Silk Road spirit, with people of many different nationalities selling everything from spice and wool to livestock and silver knives. Many of the present-day travelers are Japanese, visiting the places where their Buddhist religion passed on its way to Japan.

Although Xinjiang is opening up, it is still not an easy place to travel around. Apart from the harsh climate and geography, many of the places are not fully open

yet, and, perhaps understandably, the authorities are not keen on allowing foreigners to wander wherever they like, as Hedin and his successors had done. The desolation of the place makes it ideal for such aspects of modern life as rocket launching and nuclear bomb testing. Nevertheless, many sites can be reached without too much trouble, and there is still much to see.

Conclusion

From its birth before Christ, through the heights of the Tang dynasty, until its slow demise six to seven hundred years ago, the Silk Road has had a unique role in foreign trade and political relations, stretching far beyond the bounds of Asia itself. It has left its mark on the development of civilisations on both sides of the continent. However, the route has merely fallen into disuse; its story is far from over. With the latest developments, and the changes in political and economic systems, the edges of the Taklamakan may yet see international trade once again, on a scale considerably greater than that of old, the iron horse replacing the camels and horses of the past.

6. RELIGIONS OF THE SILK ROAD

(Richard C. Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Exchange from Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century,* St. Martin's Press: New York, 1999, PP.1-21, 23-36, 37-59, 61-87, 89-109. Permission pending)

The Silk Road and Its Travelers

Ferdinand von Richthofen invented the term "Silk Road", a term which came to epitomize exoticism and adventure. The "Silk Road" is not one road but many; it was actually a network of roads, generally going from East to West, but with spurs into southern Iran, the northern Eurasian steppe, and south over the Hindu Kush to the Indian subcontinent.

Modern silk-road storytellers usually begin their tale with the mission of Chang-ch'ien, who was sent by the Han emperor of China to the western lands in 139 B.C.E. to propose an alliance with a nomadic Indo-European people known to the Chinese as the Yüeh-Hsiung-nu (possibly predecessors to the Hun) who constantly harassed the Chinese with sporadic raids that even the Great Wall could not prevent. The Chinese Emperor was particularly keen on obtaining horses from the Ferghana valley of modern Uzbekistan. These horses were referred to as heavenly horses" that "sweat blood," really an appearance caused by skin parasites. In 104 B.C.E. the Han Emperor did send a general to acquire these horses by force but while the Chinese were only able to bring home thirty or so horses, the trade route was definitely opened and its eastern portion put under Han control.

The scholars who searched the Silk Road – Aurel Stein, Albert von le Coq, Paul Pelliot and Langdon Warner – uncovered art and architecture and, at the same time, the history of the religions which crossed this area. Manichaeism, once a great tradition of Central Asia played a large role in the lives of the people as did Buddhism and Islam. Manichaeism had long been known in the West only through the words of its enemies and only the discovery of writings and architectural ruins showed the importance and extent of the Manichaean kingdom of the 9th and 10th centuries, after the religion had become the official faith of the Uighur Turkish empire. In fact, it seems that eastern Central Asia in the premodern period was a melting pot of religious traditions because it served as a remote refuge for heterodox beliefs, and that well into the Mongol period it was one of the most religiously diverse places on the globe... religions accompanied merchants and their goods along the overland Asian trade route, a part of a much broader historical dynamic of cultural interaction, exchange and cultural conversion. The Silk Road constituted a formative and transformative rite of passage and no religion (or people) emerged unchanged at the end of that journey – Mahayana and Pure Land Buddhism, Nestorian Christianity, Manichaeism, Islam, Persians, Turks, Chinese.

The prime actors were the Sogdians, people of Transoxiana (roughly, modern Uzbekistan). They were among the earliest people to develop irrigation but the prosperity of the region depended on trade. From ancient times the principal inhabitants of Transoxiana were an Iranian stock known as Sogdians, remotely

related to the Scythians. They spoke an Iranian language which survives today in remote areas of Tajikistan. They were early converts to Islam, a decision which meshed with the fact that Muslims were taking over the trade routes and if the Sogdians wanted to remain in business it would be wise to be part of the dominant group. From the 8th c. Sogdians and other Central Asians adopted Islam and became active participants in the formation of Muslim culture. But Islam came to Central Asia through the filter of Persian culture, a prominent non-Arab influence. Islam became increasingly Persian in character. To a large extent, Islamic law, philosophy, literature, art and mysticism all developed in the Persian cultural sphere. It was therefore a very "Persianized" form of Islam that penetrated and transformed Central Asia over the next several centuries.

An interesting example is language. No religious tradition is more scripture-bound than Islam and Muslims do not believe in the translation of the Qur'an from Arabic. But in reality Arabic played less of a role in the transmission of Islam to the peoples of the Silk Road than Persian did. The Qur'an was translated into Persian or, among the steppe nomads, preached in local languages like Turkish. In general, there would appear to be a connection between the success of a religion in winning converts and the readiness with which the substance of that religion was translated into local vernaculars.

Religion and Trade in Ancient Eurasia

Central Asian history is defined largely by the dynamics of nomadic-sedentary relations, often hostile, even violent, but always mutually interdependent. This relationship has been expressed as "the steppe and the sown." Pastoral people would provide raw materials to be processed by the oasis-dwellers, who would offer back manufactured goods in exchange. Sometimes the nomads would attack and plunder the settled folk and they could either return to the steppe or become assimilated into sedentary society.

The dominant people have belonged to either the Iranian or Turkic language families... the same is true for religious beliefs, practices and myths. Many of the religious concepts of the ancient Iranian peoples appear to fit into the scheme of Indo-European religion and social structure... it has been suggested that horse nomadism, fire worship, exposure of the dead and the concept of universal dominion by a sky god were all borrowed from the Indo-European Aryans... In ancient Eurasia, religion manifested itself mainly through rituals of daily life – preparation for hunting, funeral rites, etc. Burial sites also show evidence of animal sacrifice, especially horses, but also dogs and oxen... It is upon the steppes of western Central Asia that the horse was first domesticated and hitched up to a chariot...

Zoroaster

Zarathrusthtra, or Zoroaster, is believed to have lived as early as the 13th c. or as late as the 6th c. B.C.E. Some compositions attributed to Zoroaster are preserved in the sacred book of the Zoroastrians, the *Avesta*. The hymns are in a very old Iranian dialect, close to Vedic Sanskrit. Zoroaster was a preacher, perhaps of priestly family background. He singled out one god from among the Iranian pantheon for exclusive worship and referred to this god as Ahura Mazda... he seems to have been among the earliest of the world's prophets to sow the seeds of monotheism. But Zoroastrianism is primarily a product of the Christian era. It was first codified only from the 3rd c. C.E. as the official religion of the Sasanian Empire, over 1000 years after the life of Zoroaster.

Buddhism and the Silk Road

During his lifetime the Buddha founded a quadrapartite community of followers divided between the male and female monks and lay people... this was the first large-scale missionary effort in the history of the world's religions... Buddhism has produced a body of texts more vast than any other movement in human history... Philosophy professors warn, "The serious study of Buddhism is a Black Hole – if you enter, you will never re-emerge!"

Buddhist Schools of the Silk Road

A more inclusive movement which came to be known as Mahayana, or "Great Vehicle" first gained influence in Central Asian regions such as Khotan... This was not a school *per se* but rather a "pan-Buddhist movement" defined mainly by the acceptance of new scriptures. Mahayana probably began in northwestern India or Central Asia during the first century B.C.E. Many of the Mahayanan texts were probably composed in Central Asia along the Silk Road. One of the distinctive themes was the elevation of the Buddha to the "supramundane," reflected in the belief that his death was a mere appearance. There was also emphasis on his compassion for the less fortunate and the idea that all human beings contain "the buddha-nature" and should aspire to nothing less than full buddhahood. One who embarked upon this quest toward becoming a buddha was known as a *bodhisattva*... someone who can be defined as vowing to be reborn as many times as it takes to work toward becoming a full buddha. Eventually Mahayana began to refer negatively to the traditional schools as *Hinayana*, the "Lesser Vehicle."

The Gandhara Synthesis and the Kushans

The northwestern region was home to a diverse mix of cultures, the meeting ground between the Iranian and Indian worlds. From the latter part of the 4th c. B.C.E. there was added a Greek presence as well when Alexander of Macedon conquered much of the territory and left a Hellenic administration in his wake. The Greek settlers brought with them the gods of the classical Greek pantheon but religious ideas must have been exchanged on some level with the native Iranian and Indian populations. Greeks in Asia attempted to identify local deities as corresponding to their own. As one would expect, cross-cultural influences in Gandhara went in both directions... certain Indian notions may have made their way westward into the budding Christianity of the Mediterranean world through the channels of the Greek Diaspora.

By around 130 B.C.E. Greek rule in Bactria made way to nomadic conquests by other steppe people and the Kushans arose in what is now northwestern Pakistan. The origins of the Kushans is not entirely clear, although it appears, that they were an ethnically mixed group consisting partly of Indo-European immigrants from further east along the Silk Road, a people known to the Chinese as the Yüeh-chih. The Kushans came to control the trade routes connecting the Indian subcontinent with the Silk Road to the northwest... It is in the Kushan period that the Buddha is first depicted in human form, a development which some scholars attribute to Greek influence. The Gandhara school shows a blending of Indian and Greek elements and formed the basis for the later development of Buddhist art in China and elsewhere... the most popular representation of the Buddha is Maitreya, the "future" buddha... a 3rd c. Chinese Buddhist source states that the Kushan lands were one of the main centers of Buddhism. Sogdiana does not appear ever to have experienced widespread conversion to Buddhism, however. But the Kushans were displaced by the Iranian Parthians... At the beginning of the 2nd c. B.C.E the Parthians became the new middlemen on the Silk Road, controlling the overland trade from China... Buddhist missionaries probably reached Khotan on the southern loop of the Silk Road sometime in the 1st c. Khotan was inhabited by Iranian speaking people. The people of Kucha, north of the desert, spoke a language closer to Celtic. Buddhist paintings found in Kucha are derived from the Gandharan style. The light complexioned figures are distinctly Europoid, often blue-eyed.

The Arrival of Buddhism into China

The first clear mention of Buddhism in a Chinese source is a reference in the *Hou Han shu* (Late Han History) to a Buddhist community at the court of the governor of Ch'u Province... the first Buddhist missionary who is named in the Chinese sources is a Parthian monk who arrived in Lo-yang in 148 B.C.E. This monk may have been the first to organize the systematic translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese. The oasis town of Kucha on the northern branch of the Silk Road was another Buddhist center from which missionaries traveled to China. The abundance of Buddhist remains from the area around Marv (Merv) dating to as early as the 1st c. C.E. as well as the linguistic evidence showing the evolution of Buddhist terminology via Parthian

demonstrate that Buddhism traveled first northwest out of the subcontinent into the Iranian world and then eastward along the Silk Road... And once Buddhist presence was established in China, the Silk Road offered a natural conduit by which Chinese Buddhist influences could later travel westward again through Central Asia. The idea of translating Buddhist texts into local vernaculars appears to have come to Central Asians from the Chinese; prior to the 6th c., when Buddhist texts were first translated into their own vernaculars, Central Asians were apparently content to read them in Indian languages.

Later Buddhist Movements

(A) Pure Land

The early Buddhist idea of a "Buddha land," a paradise where the teachings of the Buddha prevail, meant that the bodhisattva would purify the lands where they reside, according to the Mahayana interpretation. This land of splendor is ruled by the Buddha of Light, Amitabha, who leads his followers to salvation through his own excess of acquired merit. At the moment of death the devotee of Amitabha must focus on him in order to be transported into the Pure Land. This Pure Land movement spread along the Silk Road to China and Japan, where it became widely popular, especially among the lower classes.

(B) Tantra

Tantrism began sometime around the 5th or 6th c. CE as a movement in eastern India, combining the chanting of *mantras* (incantations) and the burning of sacrificial offerings, with yoga. This esoteric tradition was transmitted orally at first from teacher to disciple. Tibet was particularly receptive to Tantrism and that became the dominant form of Buddhism there beginning in the 8th c. Buddhism reached Tibet both from India via Nepal to the south and from China via the eastern Silk Road. From about 655 C.E. to 692 C.E., a short-lived Tibetan empire gained control over the oasis towns of the Tarim Basin, bringing the passing Silk Road trade under its jurisdiction. A century later, from just before 794 C.E. until 851C.E., they controlled predominantly Buddhist Khotan. The first Buddhist temple in Tibet was constructed in around 779 C.E. at Samye. Khotan, with its long standing Buddhist connection to Kashmir, was probably a major transmission point, especially during the periods when it was under Tibetan control.

(C) Ch'an

The usual practices, rituals, and texts of Buddhism are ultimately useless but, instead, spontaneous enlightenment can be attained through meditation on paradoxes (called *koans*) . The tradition became known as Zen in Japan.

A Refuge of Heretics: Nestorians and Manichaeans on the Silk Road

The Church of the East

Christians had disagreements over interpreting what they should believe and how they should practice their faith. One of the touchiest problems was to resolve the issue of Christ's true nature, whether divine or human... During the 5th century, a controversy arose about how Mary should be described, whether as the "Bearer of Christ", or as the "Mother of God." Nestorius, a Syrian bishop, appointed Patriarch of Constantinople in 428 C.E., took the position that he "could not imagine God as a little boy." The Patriarch of Alexandria opposed this idea and, with the support of the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius II, deposed Nestorius and banished him to Egypt. However, followers of Nestorius seceded to form the Church of the East, near modern Baghdad and his act placed the Nestorian church in the Persian world in opposition to the Byzantium church. In 486 C.E. the bishops of the East declared their church explicitly Nestorian and stating that Christ was "one divine nature only, in three perfect persons...if anyone thinks or teaches that suffering and change inheres in the divinity, and if, when speaking of the unity of the person of our Savior, he does not confess that He is perfect God and perfect man, let him be anathema." By 497 C.E., Nestorianism became the official doctrine of Christian Asia.

But Christianity's first link with the Silk Road was via the Babylonian Jews. Christians under Sasanian rule (after 224 C.E.) lived a precarious existence. Individual

emperors tolerated them but the magi were always lobbying against Iran's non-Zoroastrian religious communities.

> The Christians destroy our holy teachings, and teach men to serve one God and not to honor the sun or fire. They teach them, too, to defile water by their ablutions, to refrain from marriage and the procreation of children, and to refuse to go to war with the Shahenshah. They have no scruple about the slaughter and eating of animals, they bury the corpses of men in the Earth, and attribute the origin of snakes and creeping things to a good God. They despise many Servants of the King, and teach witchcraft.

When Rome adopted Christianity as its official religion, Christians in Iran were frequently accused of foreign loyalties. On the other hand, Roman citizens who chose not to convert to Christianity often fled the Empire and found sanctuary in Sasanian Persia, enriching Persian culture with Greek philosophers, Syrian physicians and astrologers.

Nestorians Among the Sogdians:

Sogdiana was never a region of religious orthodoxy, it was always a middle ground, a place where anything could and did pass through sooner or later. Alexander the Great left Greek influences in Sogdiana in the 3rd c. B.C.E. The Parthians left a cultural mix. By the year 650 C.E. there was a Nestorian arch-bishopry at Samarqand and another at Kashgar. Although Syriac was the liturgical language of the Nestorian church, the language in which Nestorian Christianity was disseminated across Asia was principally Sogdian, as it was for Buddhism and Manichaeism as well.

Nestorianism Among the Turks

The native religion of the Turkic and Mongol peoples of Inner Asia is generally described as shamanistic. They held the sky god, Tangri, as supreme, the male principle which was balanced by the female earth. Religious behavior was practical; the spirit world was accessed through a shaman... Apparently some of the first Christian priests to win followers among the Turks were perceived by them as shamans. In 644 C.E. a Turkish king accepted Christianity and there was a second major conversion a few years later, causing the establishment of a Central Asian metropolitan specifically to instruct Christian Turks. By the dawn of the Mongol period Christianity was certainly the most visible of the major religions amongst the steppe peoples but what Christianity meant to them is another question. The only practice that is recorded is baptism.

Nestorianism in China

Sogdian and Iranian merchants and missionaries brought Christianity to China during the 7th c., calling it the "Iranian religion." A monument erected in the T'ang capital of Ch'ang-an (Xian) in 751 C.E. contains a wealth of information about the local Nestorian community's first 150 years. There are Iranian and Central Asian names throughout, indicating the influx of Westerners along the Silk Road... In Tun-huang there is a 7th c. *Eloge of the Holy Trinity* which states that no less than thirty Nestorian works had been translated into Chinese by the late 8th c. However, it does not appear that the Nestorians won many Chinese converts since they had to communicate concepts and values entirely alien and even offensive to the Chinese. But the Nestorians did try and the monument in Xian indicates that Nestorianism was known in Chinese as "the Brilliant Religion." It would seem that the Nestorian community in China consisted of foreigners, as was the case with Judaism and Zoroastrianism. All three were brought into China as the faiths of traveling merchants and their fates were tied to the expatriate merchant communities themselves. By 980 C.E. a Nestorian monk sent to China found no surviving Christians anywhere in the country and Christianity appears to have disappeared from China.

Mani

Mani was born in the year 216 C.E. to parents of royal Parthian ancestry and raised in an ascetic religious environment. He claimed to have two revelations – one when he was twelve and the other when he was twenty-four. After that he became a

prophet and set out to preach his message. Buddhist influences were significant in the formation of his religious beliefs. The transmigration of souls became a Manichaean belief as well as the structure of the community with male and female monks (the elect) with lay followers (the hearers). Mani's message was attractive to so many people because he made every effort "to speak their language," borrowing ideas, symbols and religious terminology from every tradition in existence. The system blends Semitic and Iranian traditions so completely that scholars often have difficulty determining the underlying source. It is generally regarded as a gnostic system with a dualistic view of the universe in which "good" is equated with spirit and "evil" with matter... Mani presents himself as the culminating prophet in human history, following Zoroaster, Buddha and Jesus... he equates spirit with light and matter with darkness. The universe is seen as a realm of struggle between good and evil, with the good, represented as particles of light, striving to be liberated from the evil matter in which it is trapped.

The most visible figure in Manichaean mythology is Jesus – Jesus the Man, Jesus the Living Soul and Jesus the Splendor. The first is the historical Jesus whose death on the cross Mani considered an "illusion;" the second is the "suffering Jesus," the force of goodness in the form of light particles which are trapped in all living things; the last, Jesus the Splendor, is the embodiment of Light who visited the First Man and will return as Savior at the end of time. Mani made a point of writing down his revelations, producing at least seven canonical works which formed the scriptural foundations for his religion. He also illustrated his own scriptures.

It was the Manichaean elect who bore the responsibility of spreading the faith as itinerant preachers. The elect wore white robes and were vegetarians... The Sogdians played a major role in the transmission of the faith with their capital, Samarkand, becoming the center of the early and active Manichaean community. The Sogdians translated the Manichaean texts from Syriac, Middle Persian and Parthian into Sogdian and from that into Turkish and then Chinese.

The T'ang rulers looked on Manichaeism with suspicion and one of the emperors issued an edict that the religion could only be spread among the non-Chinese, even through the followers of Mani tried to portray their religion as a type of Buddhism.

For about 77 years, from 763 C.E. to 840 C.E., the faith did enjoy the status of an official, state-sponsored religion among the Uighur Turks. Manichaean missionaries among the Uighurs used the strategy of associating their religious concepts with those of the Turks, equating the two Manichaean gods with the sun and the moon, which the Turks revered. The Manichaeans used Turkish words for their ideas and this use of language allowed religious concepts to spread to diverse cultures. The Uighurs tried to use their leverage in the T'ang court to protect Manichaean communities in China but it was unsuccessful.

It has been suggested that this was caused by the fact that the Manichaean temples were probably functioning as money-lending institutions run by Uighur merchants. By 845 C.E. all foreign religions in China (Buddhism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism) all had lost their protection but there were some native converts until the Ming period.

Blurring Distinctions, Shared Ideas, Symbols, Vocabularies:

In Central Asia some of the subject population became Manichaean, some remained Nestorian and many others accepted Mahayana Buddhism. The texts and paintings from the Turfan oasis shows a mixing of the three traditions that often verges on the bizarre. There is a mixing of terms and vocabulary, interchanging Christian and Buddhist terms. Some of the mixing of religious ideas was even carried back west along the Silk Road to Europe. In China there is also evidence of conceptual sycretism. The famous ten-foot-high 8th C. Nestorian monument in Xian is topped by a Maltese cross resting on a Taoist cloud with a Buddhist lotus flower beneath it. The text inscribed below summarizes the essence of Christianity in heavily Buddhist-flavored terms and images (e.g. "The eight cardinal virtues," echoing the Noble Eightfold Path, etc.)

> Fulfilling the old law as it was declared by the twenty-four Sages, He (the Messiah) taught how to rule both families and kingdoms according to His own great Plan. Establishing His New Teaching of Non-assertion which operates silently through the Holy Spirit, another person of the Trinity, He formed in man the capacity for well-doing through the Right Faith. Setting up the standard of the eight cardinal virtues, He purged away the dust from human nature and perfected a true character. Widely opening the Three Constant Gates, he brought Life to light and abolished Death. Hanging up the bright Sun...He swept away the abodes of darkness...The Way would not have spread so widely if it had not been for the Sage, and the Sage would not have been so great if it were not for the Way. Ever since the Sage and the Way were united together as the two halves of an indentured deed would agree, the world became refined and enlightened.

To ordinary people this religious mish-mash often must have been quite confusing. One Chinese text offers the following advise: "Talking about accepting Buddha, one should think of converting to *which* Buddha; not Mani Buddha, not to Nestorian Buddha, nor Zoroastrian Buddha, but Sakyamuni Buddha..."

The Islamization of the Silk Road

No religious tradition in world history favored trade as much as did Islam... It is important to recognize the economic aspect of Muslim expansion... The Arab armies were simply doing what the economic conditions of their homeland had always constrained them to do... The Muslims were, in fact, no more foreign in most of the lands they conquered than had been the previous rulers (Medes, Parthians, Sasanians, etc.) and at first they were less exploitative. Initially the Arabs had seen Islam as a religion belonging to them; their subjects referred to Islam as "the Arab religion." The Qur'an enjoined Muslims to spread Muslim *rule* throughout the world but laid down no requirements to spread the faith itself... Arab Muslims had strong reasons *not* to want non-Arabs to join the faith... The problem was that a non-Arab, even after converting to Islam, had no tribal affiliation which could provide him an identity within Arab society...

The Islamization of Central Asia was a complex process which occurred on more than one level. The first, and most visible level, was the spread of political power. Muslim rule over the western half of the Silk Road came fairly early and was established by the mid-8th c. Muslims controlled much of the trans-Asian trade. Gradually the influence of charismatic Muslim preachers entered into the process. One of the most commonly cited incentives to religio-cultural conversion is the pursuit of patronage. To a large extent, converts to Islam do appear to have held onto their pre-conquest positions and being a Muslim increased one's chances of getting a better job or a new job. The Muslims dominated commercial activity and allowed businessmen to make contacts at home and abroad under the protection of Islamic laws governing commerce. Islamization came first to the urban areas along the Silk Road and only spread to the countryside in later centuries. The nomadic Turkic people gradually accepted Islam as they became more connected to the oasis-based Silk Road trade in the 10th c. Assimilation occured most profoundly among the succeeding generations. And children of a union of non-Muslim and Muslim were raised as Muslims. Central Asians of the countryside held unto their Iranian (usually agriculturalist) or Turkic (usually pastoral nomadic) native religious traditions longer than did their urban counterparts. In some ways local religion in Central Asia, whether of the Iranian or Turkic variety, never really disappeared. Rather, it acquired Islamic meanings, interpretations, and appearances.

Chinese Muslims

Today there are about five million ethnically Chinese Muslims, known as Hui, living in China. Just exactly who the Hui are and where they came from continues to be a matter of debate. Persian and Arab Muslims traded in China from the very beginnings of Islamic expansion... The earliest written reference of Muslims traveling the Silk Road to China is in the *New T'ang History*, which states that a delegation was sent to Chang'an in 651 C.E... In 757 C.E. the T'ang Emperor requested the aid of various mercenary groups to help him put down a rebellion at An Lu-shan. Muslims are mentioned as being among those who restored T'ang power. In reward for their services the Muslim soldiers

were given lands in Central China. A number of them settled and took Chinese wives. In 801 C.E. another contingent of Arab and Sogdian Muslims were hired by the Tibetans who were attacking Yunnan in SW China. The T'ang allowed the Muslims to settle there and marry Chinese women. The Hui are presumed to have been originally descended from these mercenary groups... There is little evidence that individual Chinese actually chose to convert to Islam. Once Muslim communities were established in China, however, a significant aspect of their growth was the adoption of unwanted Chinese children, who were raised as Muslims... During the period of the Yüan dynasty in the 13th and 14th c., Persian and Arab Muslims were brought to China to serve as administrators. This trend reenforced existing Chinese stereotypes of Persian and Arab Muslims as conniving, untrustworthy merchants.

7. MODERN CENTRAL ASIA: PROBLEMS OF WEALTH, A WEALTH OF PROBLEMS

(Barnett R. Rubin, Problems of Wealth, A Wealth of Problems, in *Freedom Review*/ Volume 28, No. 1. Permission pending)

In 1996, Central Asia became more clearly than ever the target of international rivalry, particularly in the regional contest over Afghanistan. Some referred to this rivalry as a new "Great Game." But the stakes today are different: not the reach of distantly based empires, but the viability of nearby states which recently became independent, and the control of pipeline routes to connect the region to the world market. The Central Asians themselves are now major players as they were not a century ago. The collapse of the USSR, with the subsequent opening of borders, has reinserted Central Asia, so long captive within a closed Soviet Union, into its position in the larger region, including Russia, China, and the Muslim states to the south.

The Economic Stake

The immediate economic stake is access to the world's largest sources of oil and natural gas outside of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Since economic interest is the main force underlying the rivalry, alignments can be fluid. Iran and Russia are allied in their approach to Caspian and Central Asian oil, favoring Iran as the main southernly route, while Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. favor an alternate route through Afghanistan. The Central Asian states stand to benefit from any southern export route and they have not lined up clearly on one side or the other.

The new states of Central Asia became independent by default. They were expelled from the USSR by the Slavic states and found themselves thrust into new roles with little preparation. None of these ethnically defined "national republics" – Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan – had ever been independent. The pre-Russian history of the region consisted of Islamic expansion in counterpoint with tribal resistance, not the establishment of nation-states. While most of the republics developed movements of ethnic and religious revival during *perestroika*, none had a well-developed nationalist movement.

The first priority of these newly independent states was to form national political systems. They had to define a new relationship with Russia and the outside world. Despite nominal independence, these states remained tied to Russia through decades of investment in economic relations, transport, communications and security, as well as education, language, and even personal and family links. At the same time, the new states eagerly seized on the opportunity to diversify the external relations that independence afforded.

No aspect of international relations had greater importance than economics. The collapse of the USSR meant the loss of budgetary subsidies, and sources of raw materials and markets for their industries. They hoped they could make up for these loses by selling oil and natural gas to foreign markets, and by attracting foreign investment to revitalize their industries and rebuild their infrastructure.

Security also posed a major problem. Portions of the former Soviet military and security forces remained in each of these states. In a clear demonstration of the

sheer newness of the situation in Central Asia, political leaders could sincerely say they did not know whether the Russians should be viewed as their allies or as the principal threat to their national security. All joined the Commonwealth of Independence States, though Turkmenistan has announced a doctrine of neutrality and therefore declined to participate in C.I.S. joint military activities, and Uzbekistan has sought to balance Russian power with a strong relation to the U.S. All but Tajikistan, still torn by a civil war, also joined NATO's Partnership for Peace.

As long as they were republics of the USSR, these states' external borders were closed and the region to which they belonged well-defined. Today, the five former Soviet Central Asian republics are not simply part of the post-Soviet space: they are also becoming part of a new, enlarged area of international interaction.

Finally, the domestic challenge of statehood has meant establishing a definition of citizenship, defining the role of ethnicity or nationality in a particular state, and creating new institutions of authority, governance, and participation. The protection of political rights and civil liberties remains precarious in the region. Threats of ethnic and religious strife, pressure from neighboring countries, and the need for stability in times of economic reform transformation are cited as reasons for limits on political activity and even for violent repression.

The Current Situation

Although Turkic Central Asia has been stable since independence, civil war in Tajikistan has continued and is closely related to the situation in Afghanistan. The Tajiks are as populous in northern Afghanistan as in their own country and speak a variety of Persian as their main language. The Tajik civil war, like the Afghan war, began as an ideological conflict between those favoring and those opposing the Soviet system. After the collapse of the USSR, however, both conflicts changed into multi-sided ones among coalitions from different regions with different foreign backers. The combatants have somewhat differing ideologies, but these are less important than regional and ethnic allegiances. Currently, the government of Tajikistan is controlled by a faction from Kulab province backed by Russia, which also maintains about 25,000 troops and border guards in the country, ostensibly for peacekeeping. Uzbekistan, Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan also maintain a token of military presence as part of the border guards. Uzbekistan played a leading role in bringing the current government to power but has lost influence Russia. The main opposition includes democrats, Islamists, and nationalists, and is largely based among the Tajik refugee population in northern Afghanistan, which receives support from international Islamist groups.

Within the past year, a third faction emerged in Khujand province in the north. This more developed region, from which the Soviet-era leaders of Tajikistan came, called on Kulabi fighters to defend it from the opposition in 1992, but then lost power. Its leaders now demand a separate seat at the negotiating table and recognition as a power in their own right. They have support from Uzbekistan.

The civil war in Tajikistan, accompanied by social disintegration and economic breakdown, has brought with it pervasive violence beyond the battle fields, which the government is unable to contain, especially since it participates in it. Assassinations of political figures, Khujandi intellectuals, and journalists have occurred. No information explaining any of these incidents have been released by the government. The violence is complicated by the fact that Tajikistan has also become a major transit route for drugs smuggled out of Afghanistan. All political groups, including Russian troops, are involved in this trade. It is one of the few ways available to pay for the war. Consequently, it is difficult to distinguish purely political assassinations from those related to criminal activities.

International Orientation

Five years after independence, the international orientation of the states of Central Asia began to diverge and stabilize. Tajikistan remained a Russian protectorate in all but name, with its security precariously protected by Russian troops and its budget more dependent on Russian subsidies than during Soviet times. The other states, to varying degrees, had begun to mark their

differences with Russia, with Turkic states gravitating toward Turkey and Tajikistan toward Iran.

Kazakstan, with its large Russian population mostly living in several northern *oblasts* (provinces or regions) adjacent to Siberia, had to maintain close relations with Russia simply to assure its existence as a state. Turkmenistan, however, defined itself as a neutral country and hoped to use its vast oil wealth as a magnet for investment, and has actively pursued economic cooperation with Iran. Iran has placed great importance on Turkmenistan since it is the only Central Asian country with which it shares a border and hence key to Iran's plan to become the major outlet to the world market for Central Asia's hydrocarbons and other products.

Uzbekistan went the furthest in demarcating an independent position. In attempts to establish close relations with the United States, Uzbekistan turned over to the U.S. detailed information on its economy, including data previously regarded as Soviet state secrets, leading to a protest from Russia. The establishment of seemingly permanent Russian bases in Tajikistan and the rise of nationalism as a force in Russian politics seems to have convinced President Islam Karimov even further that Russia had become a threat to the independence of Central Asian states. Lacking a border with Russia or a large ethnic Russian population, Uzbekistan, as the most populous Central Asian state, could try to use American support to become the most dominant regional power. Karimov had been seeking a visit to Washington for years but had been denied it on grounds of human rights.

Energy And The International Market

If there is a "Great Game" in Central Asia, it is being played out over control of the transit routes from the oil and gas fields in the region. Kazakstan and Turkmenistan are potentially major oil producers, and Uzbekistan and northern Afghanistan also have significant gas reserves. Under the Soviet system, all the energy systems and pipelines of the region were under tight central control. This is one of Russia's most important sources of leverage over the successor states. Even Kazakstan and Turkmenistan are dependent on Russia for refining and transit and have not so far realized the benefits they anticipated from economic independence.

In 1996, competition over the southern transit routes for Central Asian energy and trade heated up. Iran established the first link between its rail network and that of Central Asia (via Turkmenistan). It also established a free-trade zone on the border with Turkmenistan. Specifically, in the energy areas, it concluded agreements with both Kazakstan and Turkmenistan on what are known as "swap deals." Even with the rail link, it is still prohibitively expensive to transport resources. Most of Iran's oil and natural resources, however, are located on the Persian Gulf, in the southwest of the country, and it is expensive to transport them to consumers in the north. Under the agreement, Kazakstan and Turkmenistan will deliver oil and gas to northern Iran, in return for which Iran will export an equivalent amount of its own production from the south on behalf of the Central Asian countries. This indirect route constitutes the first link between Central Asian and Persian Gulf hydrocarbon resources.

Political Freedom and Human Rights

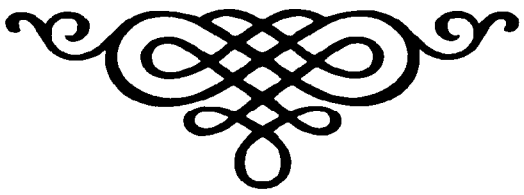
In the immediate aftermath of independence, Central Asia seems to be bifurcated between the democratic states of Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan and the dictatorship of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. But the situation is more complex. Respect for democracy and human rights varies greatly among the five states but all the states have learned that outsiders are more interested in oil wealth than in democracy.

All five states have moved toward strong presidential regimes with few checks on executive power, weak legislatures and judiciaries, and some limits on press freedom. Throughout the region, concern over ethnic challenges motivated some repression. The Kazakstan government limits the political activity of Russian nationalists, especially Cossacks, as well as Kazak nationalists with a more Islamic orientation. Tajik religious leaders seem to be subject to particular surveillance in Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and

Kazakstan, apparently under Chinese pressure, prevented Uighurs from organizing political organizations.

There is a close relation among the various problems faced by these new states and their human rights practices. Despite the concentration of power in the presidencies, all the rulers of the area feel somewhat insecure. The bases of their legitimacy are weak. Their economies have yet to recover from the shock of Soviet dissolution, though only Tajikistan remains in full collapse. The new constitutions are not yet fully working. Afghanistan remains a source of violence, drugs, and weapons. It has also become an object of rivalry among outside powers seeking access to the wealth of Central Asia.

These conditions are hardly propitious for the protection of human rights. However, the partial successes of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakstan, as well as the halting and reversible changes in Uzbekistan, show that improvement is possible, and that international pressure and engagement can push it forward. The U.S. and other foreign powers cannot bring about massive historical change in this region by fiat, but engagement with democratic forces and selective pressure can and should affect the long process of transformation.



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